

# The MODERNISTS

By **ROBERT W. NORWOOD**

*Author of "The Piper and the Reed," "The Witch of Endor," "His Lady of Sonnets," etc.*

A NEW volume by a poet who has advanced very rapidly in public recognition. "There is singing melody and beauty of diction in Mr. Norwood's work," says the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, "that carry it into the zone of pure poetry. One can imagine the author exclaiming, with Swinburnian enthusiasm: 'Thank God for this beautiful English word!' . . . A poet of distinction."

*The Modernists* present an idea of great interest. The long line of inspired poets and prophets from Moses and Paul down to Jeanne D'Arc and Darwin, speak in these pages—each one a *modernist* of his age, a transfigured singer proclaiming new truths and upsetting the sterile shams and self-contented orders of his day—Vashti's voice thrilling in the halls of Xerxes and Socrates' calm eyes gazing in his bowl of hemlock—all are there.

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BY

ROBERT NORWOOD

*Author of "The Piper and the Reed," "The  
Witch of Endor," "His Lady of  
the Sonnets," etc.*

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TO  
CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS





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O Light of all the world! Strange cosmic glow  
That lit the mind of Buddha brooding long;  
Burned in the bush of Horeb; touched the strong,  
Pure heart of Homer and, with sudden flow,  
Spilled splendour on the prophets in the throe  
Of great words uttered at the ancient wrong,  
Moved unto thunder-cadences of song,  
Ages ere Christ was crowned the King of woe.

Man on the scarlet peak of morning stands  
With face uplifted to the mounting gleam  
That draws him ever onward to one goal;  
Thou art the impulse of his eager hands,  
The inspiration of his eyes that dream,  
The infinite constraining of his soul.





# **THE CAVE MAN**

## THE CAVE MAN

IN what rude age remote from one of gold  
Found man the wide significance of fire?  
Then only did the guttural tones aspire  
To speak that Word which from the days of old  
Till now hath all our finite yearnings told.  
He stands to bridge the gulf 'twixt drum and lyre,  
Caves and the domes of Babylon and Tyre,  
Who first saw in the flame God's garment-fold.

Is not he Christ, who leaps a thousand years—  
Gains for his comrades one more steep ascent  
Upon the path of progress? Therefore, hail  
To all earth's glad, undaunted pioneers!  
Tortured and slain for Truth, theirs the content  
Of knowing that through them she must prevail.

## THE CAVE MAN

Eater of flesh,  
Eater of wood,  
Lapper of water!  
Here is more wood;  
Here is more flesh;  
Here is more water:  
I bow and kneel.

Harken, O Eater!  
O Lapper of water!  
O Thou that shinest  
Far in the night,  
High on the hills,  
Over the plains:  
Harken, O Eater!  
O Lapper of water!  
Something hurts here  
Where there is beating  
Under my breast,  
When I look up;  
When I look out;  
When I look down:  
Something hurts here,  
Back of these eyes—  
Fills them with water  
That wets my face,  
When I see Thee.

Why dost Thou sting me!  
Wilt Thou have more flesh?  
Here is a young lamb  
Torn from its mother—  
List to its bleating!  
See how the sharp stone  
Cuts the throat open!  
Ha! how the red blood  
Foams for Thee, Eater.

I only know Thee;  
I and one other:  
She of the long hair  
And the white body—  
She with the small one  
Back in the cave,  
Where the great Roarer  
Can not come near us.

Well I remember  
How I did find Thee:  
One day was noise  
With falling of water  
Out of the sky;  
She was afraid,  
Crept back in the cave,  
Holding the small one;  
Safe from the Shaker,  
The Cleaver of clouds,  
I stood and watched Thee  
Leap through the darkness.



Suddenly something  
Smote me to blindness,  
Hurled me to silence  
Down on the rock!  
When my eyes opened,  
There was a Presence  
Eating the small twigs  
Blown by the wind  
Into the cave.  
I trembled a moment,  
Wondered and watched.  
Thou wast a flower  
Sprung up from the floor,  
Thy roots in the twigs  
And out of them drew  
Brightness and beauty.  
I heard Thee make sound  
Of the leaves in their laughter,  
When the wild wind  
Goes frolicking with them;  
Of the streams in the night,  
When the white cold  
Covers them over.  
I knew Thou wast calling:  
"Something to eat!",  
Even as I call:  
"Something to eat!",  
When I am come  
Home from the hunting;  
So I brought branches

Out of the wet  
And gave them to Thee.  
How great Thou didst grow—  
Swollen from eating,  
Sudden and noisy,  
Roaring and mighty—  
How great Thou didst grow!  
Thus Thou art with me,  
And they are afraid—  
All the night-eyes  
That float through the dark—  
They are afraid  
And cry when they see Thee  
Here in my cave.

Tell me, O Eater!  
Why we are different  
From Big Face  
And Long Arm  
Down in the wood,  
Hating our cave:  
Theirs not the sharp stone,  
Neither the thrower,  
Nor do they know Thee.  
They do not make words  
That sound like the call  
Of a bird on the bough;  
Of a tree to the wind;  
Of the water to earth,  
When it falls from the hill:

Words that she makes,  
Holding the small one  
Close to her breast.  
Tell me, O Eater,  
Why her white body,  
Eyes and the red mouth,  
Make me feel something  
Where there is beating  
Under my breast!  
Why am I white,  
Short-armed and tall?  
Why am I broad  
Over the eyes?  
Why do we live  
Here in the cave;  
Why do they live  
Low in the wood?  
Tell me, O Changer!  
Why Thou art never—  
Never the same.

Thou art the Bubble  
Blown from the lip  
Of her who is Night!  
Thou art the blossoms  
Caught in the hair  
Of her who is Night!  
Thou art the Far One—  
He who gets up  
Out of his bed,

Covered with colours;  
Rises and stands  
Naked and strong,  
Brave on the hills,  
Leapeth to win  
Swiftly the top  
Of that which is sky!  
Thou art Big Tooth!  
Thou art the Roarer  
Made like a mountain,  
Whose legs are as trees,  
Whose footsteps are thunder—  
The sound of Thy voice,  
When there is noise  
With falling of water  
Out of the sky!  
Thou art all that hath wings!  
Thou art all that I see  
In her who is mine,  
Holding the small one  
Close to her breast!



# AKHENATON

## AKHENATON

FIRST on the written page of Time, he stands  
Forth from the phantoms of the reedy Nile  
That haunt the tombs of Pharaohs. For a while  
He dreamed, then woke and with inspired hands  
Made him a city. Not with proud demands  
Called he those pylons up, but with a smile,  
As of a brother, helped the builders pile  
Stone upon stone above the yellow sands.

True comrade of all ages and a Christ  
Of those far centuries, he taught his day  
What now the too-long silent years proclaim.  
To him the title—*First Evangelist*,  
Who in confusion of the tongues could say:  
*There is one God—Eternal Love His name!*

## AKHENATON

Come, Nefertiti! Let us leave the shawms  
And throbbing tabours for the curtained night  
Whose canopy is stretched beyond the Nile  
Down to the desert. What do we with sound,  
Who know that silence is melodious?

. . . . .

Behold these fragments of the disk of day,  
Shattered by Aton and spread over space:  
The seed of which He reaps to-morrow's sun!  
What growth is here! What certainty of life!  
Under the gold and glory of the stars,  
Lean on me, Love! tell me that thou art glad  
Of this our city.

Thebes; the priests of Amon;  
Intrigues of temples whose dumb idols are  
Vain shadowings of the Ineffable;  
Forever stand behind us: we are free!  
Think, Nefertiti! We are free to find  
God in the lotus, in the shrub and vine.  
He is no more the shadow of a hand  
Held high and threatening above the earth;  
He is no more propitiated Fear  
Purchased by blood from punishment for sin:  
He is the love that made me wait for thee,  
Till Ay and Ty, the foster-parents, said—  
*Dushratta's daughter is of age and longs  
To know the touch of Akhenaton's lips.*

Three feathers now are fallen from the wing  
Of that eternal, soaring seraph, Time;  
Three years in which our city grew a place  
Of palaces. The barge that brought us down  
From Thebes has rested at the pier one hour.  
Is it not well that we should be alone  
And far from any pretence of loud pipes,  
Who know that music is the soul of form?  
What forms are these! Mark well yon granite boles—  
A grove of palms is there—shaped by the skill  
Of Bek and Auta who transfigure rock  
To ordered aisles of tapered monoliths.  
Bek is a mighty builder. He has made  
This palace of the pillared porticoes,  
Fronting the disk of Aton where it blooms  
Like one great scarlet poppy of the east,  
Or folds its petals slowly to the night.  
I dreamed this lovely garden that he grew—  
Obedient and eager on my word—  
This garden into which we now descend  
To wander mid the fountains and the flowers.

· · · · ·  
Shall we disturb the bulbul on the bough  
And bid him sing? or are these thin cascades  
That pour from pool to pool past marble brims  
A sweeter song? Pause here and let me pluck  
This lotus, like a moon within the fountain;  
Upon each flattened petal there are pearls—  
I shake them on Queen Nefertiti's hair!  
The poppies are empurpled by the night;

How they will laugh with scarlet lips at dawn:  
Sweet poppies, ye are Nefertiti's lips  
Pressed close to mine—as now! . . .

Wilt thou sit, Love?

Here is a little throne of marble shaped  
By Auta for his queen. What cunning work  
Of chisel on the stone! How every line  
And whorl is emulous of patterned stars  
Laid out by Aton for the sculptor's craft!  
New art is in the work of Auta's hand.  
He will transform the lifeless, flat profile  
Of Egypt's ancient, dreamless sculpturing  
To love and laughter imaged on the wall,  
Or pedestalled beneath our porticoes.  
The little throne, my Love, is incomplete:  
Our daughter Merytaton is to stand  
Forever virgin, wrought of porphyry;  
Her body the right pillar and one arm  
Touching the back shaped like a lotus leaf.  
At left is Meketaton, while the babe  
Anksenpaaton is above thy head,  
Held by the lotus . . .

At thy feet comes rest.

Remove my crown. Make me forget the King.  
I would lose sight of Pharaoh in the man—  
The man who loves a woman on her throne!  
O Nefertiti! there is deathlessness  
Within our love. This night I know that we

Fared forth together, hand in hand, across  
The star-lit spaces of the bending sky,  
Or ever Aton flung this little globe  
Behind His shoulder and invited us  
To lose ourselves on it that we might find  
Still greater love through limiting of life.  
There is no God but Aton—He who dwells  
Here in His splendour; finds Himself in us;  
Speaks with our speech: the while from sun to sun  
He streams in glory, as yon river pours  
In never-failing flood down to the sea.  
I found thee and will keep thee, O my Queen!  
Somewhere before the scattering of stars,  
Deep in the silence of a dreamful peace  
Above the roar of new-created worlds.  
This star, O Heart! is but a halting place—  
A trysting of two souls that keep the faith—  
A field on which our spirit-hands let fall  
Seed for the growing of eternal flowers.  
How often have I lost thee, O my Love!  
I, Akhenaton, have been sunk in sleep  
Lulled by a host of crooning centuries.  
I knew the forest and I found the hills  
Ages ere Thebes was pillared near the Nile  
And there was trafficking upon the stream  
Past Memphis. All the lesser forms of earth:  
Shrub, beast and bird, barbarian and slave,  
Has Akhenaton known; rising through them  
In aspiration of thy woman's soul;  
Drawn upward through the night to meet the morn



Still must I lose thee, wail and want thee, Love!  
Go through the deserts; make all mountains mine;  
Gain strength through struggle and be purified.  
It is ordained that sometimes we shall meet  
And pass, not knowing that we met; ordained  
That I shall speak the word to thee in vain,  
For thou shalt be a maid of many dreams  
From which my voice would only frighten thee:  
But, Nefertiti, all the paths we tread  
In loneliness and pain converge at last—  
Oh, with what love and laughter we shall meet!



# PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER

## PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER

VOICES of prophets pleading for the light,  
Songs of glad minstrels making joyous sound,  
Blood of brave martyrs crying from the ground,  
Woe of all women weeping through the night,  
Bear witness to the truth: There is a might  
Greater than bannered armies; a profound  
Vaster than thought or earth's diurnal round,—  
One holy, one unalterable *Right!*

For this a princess dared a king's decree,  
Found shelter for a babe lost in the reeds,  
And gave a palace for a peasant's hut  
To him who on the granite tables cut  
Laws that outlast the pyramids—who heeds  
Time in the face of such eternity?

## PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER

Reeds only and a fleet of lotus-leaves  
Sailing through them, as though to take walled Thebes!  
Oh, how I hate yon hot, white splendour—Thebes!  
Here by the stream, let me forget those eyes—  
Eyes of the women who have been defiled.  
O Fairy Fleet! take me a prisoner;  
Bear me away among the bending reeds,  
Past all the temples and the palaces;  
Make me forget the whiplash and the cry  
Of slaves; make me forget the haunting faces.  
There is forgetting here—and joy—and peace.

Naked and unafraid, O Mother Nile!  
I come to feel thine arms about my body.  
Kiss me! Let me lie dreaming on thy breast,  
Watching the flight of birds above the palms—  
Green and like plumes along the yellow sand.  
There is a line of crimson, where the rocks  
Are crossed and re-crossed with adventuring vines  
That grow red berries,—there a glimpse of blue  
Against the purple of the mountain peak.  
I hear the dip of buckets and the sound  
Of wheels that lift to pour among the fields  
Streams of life-giving waters. How the land  
Laughs at thy coming, O dear Mother Nile!  
Olives and grapes; wheat and the clustered corn;  
Great Iris-blooms and figs and honey-dates;  
The sloping fields of grass that feed the flocks



Far up the hills whence sound of shepherd-pipes  
Blends with the murmur of a water-fall;  
Tall soldier-palms that stand in ordered file,  
Plumed and expectant of their coming queen;  
These are the offerings laid at thy feet  
In welcome from the land. I also bring  
Oblations: full-orbed breasts, round limbs, dark eyes  
And lips red-ripe for love. Lo, I am ready  
For passion of all mothers, from the maid  
Behind the mill to her upon a throne.  
I would bring a woman's gift, dear Mother Nile:  
A man-child limbed and shouldered like a god,  
And with prophetic splendour in his eyes;  
One who will speak the word against all thrones;  
Who will not be afraid of what is written  
On altar-stones or sacrificial jars;  
A trumpeter to action and a voice  
Stirring the people from their ancient sleep.  
To bring thee such a gift, I would endure  
The insolence of men who make for women  
Seraglios; tempt them with carnelian floors  
And ivory couches; blind them with the glare  
Of graven cups of gold on silken cloths  
Spread over cedar tables. With what lies  
Have men deceived us. Yet would I bow down,  
O Mother Nile, before some lord to bear  
My man-child who shall be the thunderer  
Against all wrong. . . .

What is that cry?—O Reeds!  
O Wind! O Nile! It is a baby's cry!  
He weeps among the rushes. Mother Nile,  
Give me this babe and I will teach him words  
Swifter than arrows, sharper than a spear.  
The lore of all the ages on his lips  
Shall be most musical. He will convince  
Men by the passion of his voice, the light  
Within his eyes. . . .

Where art thou, little babe?  
He sleeps, dreaming his careless mother comes.  
How I will mother him and shape his hands  
To heal the sick; to lift the heavy load  
From weary shoulders; open wide the gates  
Of guarded cities. There shall be no more  
Woe and wide lamentation in the world.  
His feet shall be announcement of the spring,  
And with his laughter many fountains vie.  
Because of him all temples and all thrones  
Must tremble till their towers tumble down;  
And where they fall children shall come to play,  
Making their flower-garlands where the blood  
Of sacrifice was vainly poured or kings  
Took tribute. . . .

Babe, O little babe! my babe!  
Where art thou hiding? Reeds, O faithful reeds,  
Tell me your secret! Hath he eyes of Egypt?  
Or do they catch the colour of the sky?

I know his mouth is one pomegranate bud;  
His hands are half-closed lotus-cups at dawn;  
His knees are bent for kisses and his feet  
Are like the leaves of lilies. . . .

Babe! my babe!

Where art thou hiding? Make a little sound,  
O son of mine, a whisper as of wings  
About thy head where Hathor holds her hand,  
Talking to Isis who is also near.  
The deities of death and life are met  
And there is noise of an eternal Word!  
It is a call of music out of mist,  
When evening wakens silence with the stir  
Of water that is muted by the trees.  
It is the noise of morning on the mountains  
And thunder of far cities in the noon.  
It is the wail of women after war,  
Weeping for those who will not come again.  
It is the song of reapers in the corn;  
The croon of maidens bringing home the jars  
With water from the well; laughter of men  
Over their cups of wine beside the door  
At tales of bearded herdsmen from the north  
Or quips of camel-drivers from the south.  
It is the reedy music of a shout  
Of gladness greeting children after school.  
It is the clamour of loud temple-shawms  
And beating of the bells; wisdom of words  
Spoken by prophets coming out of roads  
From lonely places where the gods are heard

By those whom vision makes unsatisfied  
With shadows. It is all earth's many sounds  
Blended within one Word—eternal Word!  
O wonder of that Word my babe shall speak,  
Be thou the cry that tells me where he hides  
Among the reeds! Yea, as I hunt for him,  
So will all ages come with praying hands  
And lips that supplicate; for he will teach  
Between the pillars of the past and present,  
Royal and crowned with truth: yea all the world  
Will laugh because of him. . . .

Again that cry!

Hush, O my baby! I am coming. . . . Ah—!





# MOSES

## MOSES

WHEN God beheld how Moses turned to see,  
A voice called from the bush. So runs the tale.  
A truth is here—a truth that will prevail  
Now as of old: Who would a prophet be,  
Must find light in the little wayside tree;  
Joy in the desert; he must never fail  
Earth with her store of stinging hail,  
Dew on the grass, night and her galaxy.

Lift up your eyes unto the hills of morn!  
Truth is not truth that does not glorify  
The desolate and barren bush of thorn;  
Fills not with stars the tempest-clouded sky;  
Brings not the murmur of a choric strain  
Of triumph from the threnody of pain.

## MOSES

O wild red bird of sunset on the hills!  
O winged and awful splendour of the day!  
Fold thou thy feathers of pure flame and see  
What beauty makes this mountain-shrub divine.  
How I have watched thy flight above the sand,  
Making it molten in a flood of gold  
Until the camel-trains out of the east  
Floated like barges and the pyramids  
Were hills of fire! What wonder hast thou wrought  
Upon the pillars of old palaces  
And temple-doors and pavements and great walls!  
The vineyards that within thy glory stand,  
Expectant of the little globes of grapes;  
The foam along the runnel, when the wine  
Pours from the press into the fragrant jar  
Waiting to join its fellows where the cool,  
Dark cellar keeps them; grist of yellow corn  
Ground in the little mills before the doors,  
And scarlet lengths of linen on the grass  
Where women weave, sing to the shuttle's tune  
Or chatter while they thread the measured warp:  
These are among thy many miracles,  
O wild red bird of sunset on the hills!  
But never hast thou worked such miracle  
Of beauty as in yonder bush of thorn.

O little bush, how common and how grey  
Until this moment of the setting sun!  
I have passed thee a thousand, thousand times,

Leading the flocks of Jethro home to fold  
Yet never knew thee beautiful as now.  
Yea, thou art beautiful and all divine—  
Jehovah is thy spirit, thou His flesh!  
Thy thorns are like the flame-points of a star,  
Each branch the clustered beams of Mazzaroth.  
The place whereon I stand is holy ground—  
The Lord is here and I behold His face!  
Jehovah! Thou art He for whom I sought  
Through Egypt and her gathering of gods  
In gloomy temples.—Speak, Jehovah, speak!  
Yea, let Thy voice come quivering to me  
Along these branches lit with sunset-flame.  
Thou art that discontent which led me on  
Past muttered words of priests and bloody shrines  
To freedom of the desert and this hour.  
Thou dost not dwell in pyramids; Thy voice  
Is not within a book; Thou dost not spend  
Thy music only on an ancient psalm.

How I have waited on Thee, O my God!  
I could not rest with ivory and gold;  
A palace like to Pharaoh's near the Nile;  
Slaves and the moving of great peacock-fans  
For noontide slumber: runners in the streets  
Who cried before my car: *Prince Mesu comes!*  
Against the glitter of a scarab ring;  
The scarlet as of poppies in my robe;  
The sistrum and the viol at the feast;  
I held the sleepless nights and tardy dawns

That witnessed to my waiting for a sign  
Of freedom from the yoke and goad of Egypt,  
Galling my people.

Yea, thou art the sign,  
O wild red bird of sunset on the hills!  
My sandals are unloosed. Unshod I kneel.  
O bush that burns and yet is not consumed,  
Be thou my symbol of the universe!  
God is the light that gives to common things  
Divinity, sharing its radiance  
With all creation. God is unconfined.  
The shrub, the mountain and the moving star  
Possess Him. He is in the breath of buds  
Bursting to bloom; the fruit on laden boughs  
Of autumn when the wind comes down the fields  
To dance among the furrows and to spill  
Odours of russet apples on the air.  
God is the thrill of youth's first kiss of love;  
The ecstasy of mothers with their babes,  
The feel of them when lips are on the breast  
And there is thrusting of wee hands and feet.  
God is the laughter of all smitten harps.  
He is the madness of loud battle-gongs.  
He is the call of trumpets, roar of drums,  
Crash of the lines of level spears that meet,  
Hiss of the arrows that come down like rain.  
God is the joy of craftsmen in their craft:  
The sculptor's tender touching of the stone  
That takes the form and substance of his dream;  
Persistence of the chisel and the plane,

Fidelity of broadaxe to the line;  
The music of the trowel and the twang  
Of cords plucked for the marking of a beam.  
God is the wisdom and the calm of eyes  
Rapt with the mystery of occult words  
Graved in the rock or written on the roll  
By prophets who have dared the gates of death  
To find what angels whisper from the stars  
Of man and his high destiny beyond  
The golden glimmer of their farthest zone.

I will go back to Egypt. I will stand  
Before the priests of Amon and proclaim  
One whom they do not know, who bow to bulls  
And crocodiles. I will declare that God  
Dwells not in gloomy temples made with hands,  
That God is templed by eternity.  
I will go to my kinsmen, call them forth,  
Bid them be brave against their bonds and dare  
The fear that fetters them, teach them to laugh  
At shadowing of thrones, make them as gods  
For freedom and for truth. The quest of truth  
Shall go from star to star. Earth shall be led  
Up paths of light in the processional  
Of misted wings of flame and burning brows  
And robes of beryl. From the topmost dome  
Of heaven to sheol's utter dark abyss  
There shall be loud hosanna from the suns  
To Man the Victor who will scale the sky,  
Daring the infinite of space for God!



NAAMAN

## NAAMAN

DOMES of Damascus, daring minarets,  
Above what olden memories you rise!  
There is a brooding Presence in your skies—  
A winged god or an angel—who forgets  
Not anything of yesterday but lets  
Time pierce him with a scythe; through great wide eyes  
Of sorrow he beholds the past that vies  
With this brief moment, while the Pharpar frets  
Lost stones of beauty.

O Damascus! Domes  
And minarets are not your ancient pride:  
Yours the achievement of one mighty man  
Who found his soul and saved it. Not the homes  
Of kings could tempt him from the path he tried—  
Steepest of paths since quest of truth began.

## NAAMAN

I will not in the hateful House of Rimmon  
Bow any more the head or bend the knee.  
Here are but idols. Tombs are these tapered shrines—  
Tombs of dead lies that long deceived the people.  
I will go forth to God beneath the sky,  
Meet Him upon the mountains where the dawn  
Wears saffron for an ephod—is the priest  
Whose turban still the morning star adorns.

. . . . .  
Have done with drone of penitential psalms,  
With altars wet and slippery from blood!  
Have done with fearful and uplifted eyes,  
With hands of supplication clasped in prayer!  
Snuff out these wicks that intercede for souls  
Released by death and singing in the sun!  
Does God care for the blood of bulls and goats,  
Who feeds the cattle on a thousand hills?  
Come! get the benediction of the day  
Whose hands are dropping honey with the dew,  
And let the loud hosanna of the wind  
Make me forget the hateful House of Rimmon.  
I have been too long beggared by half truths.  
Cramped in brocaded garb of compromise,  
I, Naaman, Commander of the host,  
Benhadad's friend, Damascus' greatest son,  
Am but a beggar!—Nay, hear all my word:  
Count not my ropes of pearl, my jacinth jars,  
My topaz, diamonds and chrysoprase;

My many-pillared palace on the hill,  
The women of the harem and the slaves;  
My drove of dromedaries from the south  
And white Arabian stallions in their stalls,—  
Count not these riches, for I thirst and starve  
Within this plenitude of much possession.

Since I talked with Elisha, cleansed and free,  
How I have hated Rimmon and his house!  
The Prophet had no gold. He would not take  
Gifts from my hand. He stood beneath the noon  
Bareheaded and unbowed—a man among  
The sons of men—the kind that I would be—  
Unvexed by fear of any god. His eyes  
Looked bravely on the world. Heard you his voice,  
Forthwith a distant stream fell from the crags;  
A wind went murmuring among the vines;  
An intermittent moaning of the sea  
Blent with the sound of trumpets blown for battle.  
I knew him for a comrade and a brother;  
My first and dreamed-of own familiar friend;  
A breaster of the hills, lord of the staff  
And of the long-leagued sandals and a good,  
A hearty wayfarer fond of all roads—  
A gatherer of grapes in many vineyards.  
He had no fear of talking with his god  
Who is now my god! —aye, and face to face  
With Him he held high and direct communion.  
I heard from him no psalm of penitence,  
No sobbing to the beating of the breast;

God was to him the common and the tried,  
The always-here, the never-absent One.  
Partaker of the little things of life:  
*God the great Casual and Commonplacel*

The challenge of those far prophetic eyes  
Now follows me and I can bear no more  
Their mild rebuke—I hate the House of Rimmon!  
Benhadad's hand will vainly seek the hand  
Of Naaman. The host will call and call  
Among the tents of Pharpar for their lord.  
There will be sound of voices in the streets,  
Crying: *Where is our Captain Naaman?*  
The people of the market will forget  
The feel of scarlet leather to the touch  
Of fingers that are trained to tell the eye  
The value of a saddle. By the door  
Where potters whirl the wheel and mould the clay,  
Leading the bowl and oval pitcher up,  
There will be talk of Naaman and how  
He left Damascus. Clink of coin and stir  
Of buyers in the great bazaar will cease  
While men stand wondering at word of him  
Who could forsake their bales of merchandise:  
Silk and fair linen and fine tapestries,  
Coffers of amber holding frankincense,  
Urns of red agate and tall festal cups  
Lipped by a lace of pearls upon the gold.  
They will not know. They will not understand.  
Slaves of the god that glitters, they will go

Back to the tables where the baubles are.  
The wheels will turn, the huckster cry his wares,  
The fool go back to folly and the knave  
Complete his crime. Ere morning part in twain  
The starred and purple curtain of the night  
To let the laughing day leap from the sun,  
I shall be gone. Never more swift the feet  
Of lover to the tryst than mine shall be  
Against the nearing length of Lebanon.  
Across the crescent splendour of the stream  
Called Jordan, past the hedges and the walls  
Of little gardens, I will go and find  
My prophet of the wistful open eyes;  
My dreamer of the dear and tender mouth;  
My laughing comrade of unventured hills:  
That I may learn from him the road that leads  
Out of this night of Rimmon into day  
Of fearless, glad companioning with God.

## **THE PROPHET OF CHEBAR**



## THE PROPHET OF CHEBAR

ABOVE the stream of scarlet Babylon  
All harps were hung while captive Judah wept—  
Remembering lost Zion. Prophets slept;  
The Oracle was mute; then there came one  
Who found in alien streams, when day is done  
Or dawning in the desert, notes that swept  
His heart with gladness: he was true and kept  
Faith with his joy, like flowers with the sun.

Read and mark well, O spirit! for thou too  
Art of the prophets, if thou canst find peace,  
Singing a new song when the harps are still.  
Go, win from every stream wild notes that woo  
Thy fancy; laugh, though other laughter cease;  
With thy glad music all waste places fill.

## THE PROPHET OF CHEBAR

Come harken, O my people, to the song  
Jehovah taught me to the cadences  
Of Chebar where a little lodge still stands  
Above the rushes and the cushat dove  
Calls in the lotus-laden night of dreams:  
A lodge of wattles, roofed with russet reeds  
That shelter from the thrusting scimiters  
Of fierce, relentless Babylonian noons.  
Here have I pondered through the silences  
Life's riddle—caught the thin elusive threads  
In labyrinthine windings of the words  
God writes on stones, twigs, leaves, flowers and grass;  
Here have I read the scriptures of the night,  
Lettered with stars upon a purple scroll:  
Here have I found creation held in awe  
Of some great secret which it dare not tell,  
And yet is ever on the brink of telling.  
I yield to form and colour of the sky,  
The majesty of mountains on their thrones—  
The ridges through the valleys. I rejoice  
Before the iridescence of a pool,  
And pray within the solitude of trees.  
The flowers are my most familiar friends.  
The thistle and the bramble and the thorn  
Offer their odours freely when I pass.  
I understand the sounds of night and day:  
Whisper of roads; call of far caravans;  
Twitter of mother-moments on the bough;

Noise of great cities hidden by the hills.  
I am made free from fettering of tears  
That instant when a bird is on the wing,  
Or there is joyous piping from a tree.  
Earth, sea and sky, in turn for love I give,  
Grant me glad moments of their fellowship;  
Tell what is happening above the stars;  
Betray the planned surprises of the trees  
Long ere the leafing time and let me find  
How, underneath the moon, whatever draws  
Soul from the soil—the flower and the fern—  
Dances and makes low music with the wind.  
So, harken to your brother of the lodge  
Down by the river, playing on a harp  
And singing of the secret of the sun,  
The moon, the stars, the mountains and the sea;  
Yea, harken, O my people, to the song  
God taught me to the music of the stream!

. . . . .  
The song of the river!

The song of the river that floweth  
By Babylon out of the desert and into the desert:  
O man that mourneth under the roof of thy lodge  
Hard by the river called Chebar,  
Why wilt thou weep with desolate tears  
And crying of one who can not be comforted?  
Thou who hast loved me from babyhood here on my banks,  
Played in the sun and laughed when he smithied  
My waters to brass when the wind floated a leaf  
Of the palm on my flood; thou who hast watched

Through the morning thy mother bent over the blue,  
The scarlet and yellow woof of her weaving,  
Chanting the bow-twanging words of the Psalmist:  
Why wilt thou weep with desolate tears  
And crying of one who can not be comforted?  
Thou who hast wrought with thy father  
Yokes for the cattle or fashioned sharp sickles,  
Shaped a share for a plough and hewed out the beam;  
Thou who hast walked down the furrows of spring,  
Holding the melon-shaped jar of the seed  
Hard to thy hip, the seed of the barley and corn;  
Thou who hast taken a lamb from the lion and bear,  
Braving the terror of night for the fold,  
Leading the sheep down the slope of the pastures  
Till the time for the homing of them was at hand  
In the last red glare of the sun, and the moon  
Came out of the olives and stood upon Carmel  
Far away in the land of thy fathers:  
Why wilt thou weep with desolate tears  
And crying of one who can not be comforted?  
Thou who hast dreamed and communed with thyself,  
Lone in the starlight and rapt with the music  
Made as I poured over the pebbles and into the rushes,  
Thinking the thoughts of great harpers and prophets  
Who have heard God speak in the thunder of judgment  
Or plead in a tone more tender than that of a woman;  
Thou who hast mused on the words of the mighty—  
Psalms that are keyed to the quivering soul  
And writ with the blood of a heart that was broken—  
Psalms that are blent with the magic of moon-mist

And sun-glow and sky-blue and little cloud-fringes,  
Tinctured with scarlet on mouth of a maiden  
Pale from the pain of the joy of her first kiss,  
Where the dusk green of the arbours of ivy  
Brings out the gold on the gourds in the garden—  
Why wilt thou weep with desolate tears  
And crying of one who can not be comforted?  
Know that the day is at hand when the terror  
Shall fall from the face of the mourner;  
When crying shall cease and the loud lamentation;  
When nation shall not make war against nation:  
When love, like the light of the sun in his strength,  
Shall shine on the earth and fill the waste places—  
Shall bring in the joy of the Lord and His Sabbath!

# SOCRATES

## SOCRATES

WHAT blasphemy to call earth *Lucifer*,  
*The fallen Star!*—Brightest and best among  
Those myriad celestial spheres wide-flung  
In space, earth is acclaimed; Algol to her  
Bows down; the strains of Vega's harping stir  
Dawn from the arms of Night with anthems sung  
To praise this planet, in that mystic tongue  
Spoken by gods, graved on the gates of Ur.

Fairer than beauty of the Pleiades,  
Earth passes on her way triumphant—known  
Among the constellations as the throne  
Of greatness proved by every test of pain;  
Therefore the words of Vega's far refrain:  
*All hail, O Star that gave us Socrates!*



## SOCRATES

Appolodorus—! Son, thy tears and cries  
Confine my thoughts. What I would say is this—  
Crito, canst thou not soothe Appolodorus?  
There, there, dear lad! I did not mean rebuke;  
Thy love falls on my heart, as falls that ray  
Of sunset out of blue Athenian skies  
Through yonder window. How the wild motes dance,  
And to what music, down the path of Phoebus!  
Sweet are the sounds we can not hear, and fair  
The forms we can not see; for ear and eye  
Are lately fashioned instruments of Mind  
Which has not mastered them and made them serve  
The higher senses: we are only come  
Out of the wilderness. Let my sunbeam  
That spans the gulf twixt all our yesterdays  
And immortality's to-morrow be  
To Socrates a final theme for thought.

Plato, what thinkest thou?—The All is Light:  
Not Fire, as Heraclitus taught; not Air,  
Not Moisture. Light is the Forth-going One,  
The Self-communicator and the Source  
Of everything that is. How all the priests  
Who rail against the evil times forget  
That man's divinest mood appears when men  
Are most forgetful and are sunk in sloth,  
Or dally with their dreams!—A message here  
For all these troubled times: this wide unrest  
And bickering of civic politics,

With marching of great armies up and down  
The desolated highways of the world.  
O Athens of the gods, hail and farewell!  
The centuries will rise and call thee Queen;  
Men of Olympian brows proclaim thee first  
To find the universal harmony:  
They will forget this bowl of hemlock-brew,  
Bitter as tears of poor Appolodorus,  
Remembering thy beauty.

How the dust  
Goes dancing down the slanted plane of light,  
Like dryads hunting for Persephone  
Light is the All: again the figure, friends.  
Was Phidias defeated by the stone?  
We would not know the man, had marble failed  
To quicken his great craft of sculpturing.  
Did Homer sing the song of Ilion:  
Achilles' courage and the bullock-strength  
Of Ajax or the cunning Ithacan,  
In muted melody for being blind?  
The marble was the friend of Phidias,  
Resisting him that out of struggle birth  
Of an eternal beauty bless the world;  
Immortal music hath crowned Ilion;  
Achilles' glory is the wounded heel;  
Ajax is now the brute become divine;  
Ulysses lives forever through the loss  
And doom that drove him up and down the sea:  
Light is the All, Evil is but the dark  
Through which the rays perpetual appear.

I, Socrates, who am about to die—  
*About to die?* what folly is in words!  
There is no death, save that which seems to be—  
The opposite of life, life that is all,  
Since life and light are one: life is made known  
By death, as sound leaps from the tightened string;  
Death is to life as marble to the sculptor,  
Waits for the touch that lets a soul go free;  
Death is that moment ere the swimmer feels  
The swift pain of the plunge into the pool,  
Followed by laughter where the bubbles flow  
From the divided water and the sun  
Turns them to crystal: life and light are one.

What do I mean?—Do words conceal the soul  
Of Socrates? Oh, ye are dumb with tears!  
Harken, and I will tell what I declared  
Before the Judges.—Take my speech, thou scribe,  
Plato the lord and minister of words,  
That for all time it may be known of men  
How Socrates was brought to birth of Light.  
It happened on this wise: 'Twixt youth and age,  
I heard the calling of an idle morn  
And forthwith took the old Piræan road,  
For joy of gossiping among the boats  
Along the shore. Priapus danced with Pan.  
Dear Aphrodite shook the clustered foam  
From her dark hair and silvered all the sand  
With bubbles. Pallas came upon a cloud  
With Lord Apollo playing. Naiads cried

For Hylas who returned from wandering,  
And whispered tales of cities built of gold.  
A Triton blew, melodious and long,  
Poseidon's ancient challenge to the shore.  
I heard the ever-whispering of palms;  
A mother somewhere, soothing her hurt child;  
An oath of anger from the bearded mouth  
Of one half drunken sailor out of Tyre,  
In quarrel with a comrade near the prow  
Of their beached trireme.—Oh, the sights and sounds,  
The quickening of days beside the sea!  
Then in a moment I stood forth within  
A wide ellipse of broad leaf-margined flame,  
In colour like a bank of violets.  
All that was, is or shall be drew in one  
Supreme cognition. I was mixed with all.  
I understood the stars; I raced with them  
Across the sky beyond the fiery foam  
Of that eternal sea which casts up worlds  
With the forever-motion of its waves.  
Out of old discords grew the harmonies  
Of atom, stone and clod and earth and star.  
I saw the ancient strife of hate with love  
Cease at the laughter of the larger gods  
Grown from the human, and at length aware  
Of earth's immortal values won through tears.  
I knew that sin was but the purple hem  
Upon the seamless robe of holiness;  
That slave and king were merely earthly masks  
Concealing brothers; that a harlot's eyes

Were windows of a soul in prison, caught  
Within the snare of sense, held for a while  
In bonds of shame till death breaks down the door  
And sets the captive free; that in their time  
All creatures gain the path and win to light,  
Find what was lost, restore what was destroyed.  
How good, how kind were all things! Tragedy  
Walked with the laughing naked Pastorals.  
Hector and Priam shouted: *All is well!*  
To Agamemnon. Clytemnestra leaned  
In deathless rapture on her lord and king.  
Antæus rose and called to Heracles,  
And they embraced, talking of their old strife;  
How in the grapple of their mighty arms,  
The opposition of their straining breasts,  
Courage, nobility and strength were found.  
Pluto came forth forever out of hell,  
After Persephone who flung white flowers  
Upon his path, and from the underworld  
A song of gladness poured. There was no need  
That Sisyphus should strive against the stone;  
That Tantalus should stand above the stream,  
Wailing for water, or Eurydice  
Fade from her lover who had dared to look  
Back on the road that led from death to life.  
Sunlight was on the sea where Jason saw  
Medea slay her babies, and a wave  
Of jade and pearl upbore them back to him—  
Faithful at last and by his queen forgiven.



Mine was a moment's vision, when all things  
Were manifested; then the flame went out,  
And once more I was made aware of flesh:  
A thick-lipped, bulbous-eyed old satyr-face;  
A long-armed, lumbering lump called Socrates;  
A taster of good wine through thirsty nights  
Of banqueting—nay, Plato! though thou dost  
Nod that great brow in protest of my words,  
I am akin to Pan—not to Apollo.  
Yet I confess a dignity that draws  
My dæmon to my side, the brother-god  
Who calls me friend; he claimed me on the shore  
When there was light, and ever since hath kept  
Companionship with Socrates: a Voice  
Sounds in my soul that walks at ease with God—  
God who is uncreated Light and Life—  
A Voice that is the spirit of all sound—  
*The Logos!* . . . Plato, dost thou know *The Word?*  
Of it I shall speak later ere I die.  
This Voice is still. It doth not cry aloud  
And clamour like the gusty Gorgias  
Or loud Thrasymachus. It is the breath  
Of twilight on the fields, the murmuring  
Of ripened corn, the noise of water heard  
Remote and far, the footfall of a friend,  
The yea of maidens wooed and won within  
The star-lit rapture of a summer night.  
Not always have I heard this inward voice:  
Waste wildernesses, paths of wandering,  
Thorns and the thickets and the rocky hills;

Wild beasts about me, gnashing with their teeth;  
The slipping feet! the clutching hands! the fall!  
The shame of failure—oh, I know them well!  
The Voice comes not for calling, is not heard  
In answer unto prayer, and is not moved  
By smoke of altars.—Sudden Word of God!  
He who hath never heard thy silver sound,  
Must come again through mortal motherhood  
Until the patient soul by many births  
Hath trained the ear to listen and the heart  
To understand.—*Gnothi seauton*, friends!  
So shall ye hold communion with the soul—  
Thy mansioned soul wherein the Voice is heard  
And Logos is made manifest: this teach,  
My Plato. Age shall follow age, and men  
Waste on red battle fields their periods  
Of growth, or squander in the market place  
The golden sequences of earthly hours;  
Yea, men shall die the ancient ugly death  
And seek re-birth, and being born, forget  
The holy purposes of mother-pangs,  
Until at length shall rise a godlike race  
Obedient to One who will be called  
*The Word Incarnate!* Then shall come the Light,  
And life shall be held sacred—yea, all things  
That struggle upward shall be helped by man  
To share the going on from star to star  
In hosts of joyous souls adventuring!

The Logos, Xenophon?—the *thought* of God.  
What, Crito?—yea, it is a mystery



Hid in the ages ere the world began,  
And dimly understood by those who delve  
Deep into Nature and discover truth  
Writ on the rocks and woven with the stars.  
God always thought, and, thinking, sent forth waves  
Of everlasting light: He is that Sun  
Whose all-including rays challenge the dark  
And dare the void: each ray hath form and name,  
Intelligence and power; knows love, gives love,  
Finds love in fellowship with those who shine  
Supernal from the depths of Him who thinks:  
The Logos is a word that names these gods  
Outgoing from one God, and in return  
For life descend to earth and share its pain!  
By them the world was made and man was formed:  
Each atom means the exile of a soul  
Imprisoned by its act through sacrifice  
Of self, that it may lead up into light  
Another *self*—all glorious and wrought  
Of anguish and of pain to be a god:  
Man is the great adventure, is the goal  
Won by indwelling Thought that is divine!  
My moment by the sea, wherein I found  
The fellowship of things—the harmonies  
Of atom, earth and star—was the return  
Triumphant of a Logos to the Light!

Art thou in shadow still, Appolodorus?  
*Gnothi seauton!* Know thyself—*thyself*:  
One Logos lost within determined dust,

Ages before the sunrise on the hills,  
That He might make thee through ascending forms—  
Broken by death and mended by new birth!  
Yea, death and birth are sunset and sunrise,  
Dividing day and night until the year  
Fulfills its seasons—many deaths and births,  
Appolodorus, hast thou known; thy months  
Are measured by the orbits of the stars,  
Thy year out-distances the path of suns!

. . . . .

Out of this cup I drink to all good friends:  
Wayfarers of the world who bravely seek  
After the truth: all minstrelsy of song,  
And healers of the gentle touch, and those  
Who dare untrodden roads for no reward  
Save joy of finding out another path  
For clodded feet that falter on old ways  
Leading nowhither, and the gossellers  
Who laugh tears out of tired eyes that weep  
The ancient error and the fault that clings.  
There! empty is the bowl and flung aside  
To shatter like a shard upon the floor;  
But other bowls are waiting for the wine  
That shall be poured unwasted to their brims,  
Red, sparkling in libation to the gods  
Who now receive the soul of Socrates!

. . . . .

Light! . . . Plato, the Voice! . . . Appolodorus—



**VASHTI**

## VASHTI

ACROSS the tumult of great Xerxes' feast  
One word was spoken, just a woman's word!  
It shattered sound. Its syllables were heard  
Like loud doom-trumpets of the fated East  
Drunken with wine and sodden as a beast  
Fat for the altar. Eyes from drinking blurred,  
Glared over goblets; from his divan stirred  
One with an ephod: *Slay her!* cried that priest.

Vashti! Stand forth to work your woman's way  
Upon the idle feasters of the world;  
Shatter the noise of revels where men feed,  
Forgetful of the God whose judgment day  
Brightens the sky: a word of thunder hurled  
Against those tents of shame heralds your deed.

## VASHTI

Ye seven slaves of Xerxes, back to him!  
Go tell your drunken master, Vashti saith:  
*Groom of my father Evil-Merodach,*  
*I will not go naked and posturing*  
*Unto the feast! how many cups of wine*  
*Made thee so insolent?*

Sisters, see how  
Vashti flings crown and ring to yonder eunuchs,  
Claiming equality with man! Follow,  
And bid your lords go loveless through the world,  
Until they cease to reckon so much gold  
Against our bodies! Oh, the centuries  
Of bartering what never may be bought—  
Love at the price of cattle! Will ye not stand,  
My friends, for freedom? One by one, the years  
Come weeping and they cry: *Follow, follow*  
*Queen Vashti!*—Will ye waste those tears?—*follow*  
*Vashti to death or exile!* Follow me!

Men will not always rave of woman's mouth,  
As though it were a scarlet poppy bud  
Blown into beauty on their sudden breath;  
They will not ever sing about her eyes  
And talk of pansies open to the dawn,  
Or hymn her breasts and say they are white lilies;  
They will not rope her neck about with pearls,  
Bind her with bracelets till the hands and feet  
Are fettered like an Ethiopian slave,

Fool her with rings on perfumed fingers:  
Together man and woman shall go up  
To all that we have meant by serving gods—  
Those faces in a dream which are ourselves!

Ye whisper, pale, go faltering from me?  
Will no one stand with Vashti in this cause?  
Then by the singing certainty of truth!  
Let Vashti be the first to dare the fate  
Of woman claiming comradeship with man,  
And sow the seed of far-off harvesting.

Ye slaves of Xerxes, take Queen Vashti's word  
Back to your master and his host of liars;  
Yea, tell him to recall the time that he  
Met Vashti in a grove of Babylon,  
And there were doves about her and a song  
Of bulbuls and a falling of far-water . . .

Oh, why did Xerxes plead, who holds so cheap  
His lady that he bids her walk to-night  
Naked among his guests? Why did he woo  
Young Vashti's virgin mouth, why did he vow  
The gilded marble domes of Babylon  
And all the pleasure palaces of Dura,  
Hers for a hostage of reluctant kisses?—

Go——!

My Xerxes, thou hast killed the priceless thing!  
There was a time when Vashti bled to see



One little mark of pain upon thy brow.  
What wakeful nights she watched, lest noise disturb  
Thee—home victorious from war or tired  
From every care that comes upon a king!  
Thy step, thy voice, thy touch made her heart leap,  
Like little conies up and down the hills;  
Like leaves beneath the moonlight, when the wind  
Kisses the vineyards and the trailing gourds  
Are green among the furrows; like the waves  
That rise and fall in passion to the shore!  
O Xerxes! hadst thou harkened unto her,  
How she would save thee from the lies of men!  
Xerxes! together we could win the world—  
The world that thou hast lost with Vashti's love.



**BALTHAZAR MAGUS**

## BALTHAZAR MAGUS

THERE was no need for him to con the page  
Of any oracle, knowing the night  
And every star. Those awful spheres of light—  
Vast orbs whose cycles thought alone could gauge—  
Filled him with wonderment, led past his age  
Balthazar. What was that celestial sight?  
An angel pausing in majestic flight?  
Lord Christ descending to His heritage!

Blessed is he, who, when the Master comes,  
Meets his high moment of the sudden star:  
While others lie locked in a dreamless sleep,  
Or there is banqueting, or the loud drums  
Of dawn throb up the hired hosts to war,  
And men are dying and their women weep.

## BALTHAZAR MAGUS

Virgo, thou maid of heaven! within thy hand  
An ear of wheat! yea, Spica burns the best,  
The brightest of thy stars. The moon is down.  
I saw one horn of her gore at a cloud  
Low on the desert. How the harbour lights  
Glimmer and fall! they are like yellow petals  
Shaken from little flowers of the field  
Before that great red lotus of the north—  
Pharos! held high upon its marble vase  
And lifted over Alexandria,  
To lead the sailors in: two triremes now  
Steal past the quay with homeward-moving oars.

'Tis good to be alone among the stars  
Upon this temple stair.—There goes Arcturus,  
Leading his flocks; behind him he has flung  
The Northern Crown with Gemma's golden glow:  
He has no care for crowns, who loves the sheep!  
Perchance Arcturus knows that Vega plays  
Her harp for him, and with celestial song  
Almost persuades her shepherd to turn back.

Ha, Draco! ever in thy swift pursuit,  
And ever foiled of feeding on the flocks  
Arcturus leads, what holds thee from thy prey?  
Is Vega's love preventing? do her eyes  
Dare that deep gulf made by those gaping jaws,  
And pierce them as with arrows from a bow?

How hate and love are written with the stars  
That tell of love triumphant!

Whose the hand  
That turned the Dipper down and emptied it  
Of all its gold now scattered on the sky?  
In vain the Little Dipper intervenes—  
The flood spills past its proffered brim to flow  
Into the waiting coffers of the night!  
Vega, didst thou do this?

There Libra stands  
To weigh the gold. How many talents worth,  
Dear Lady of the Scales, shall Vega have  
For marriage-portion, if she wed Arcturus?  
Let her now pray at Virgo's shining feet  
A blessing on her nuptials! let the sheaf  
That Leo's sickle reaped content the maid—  
Gold is for kings—Arcturus cares for sheep!

Back to thy desert, scaly Scorpio!  
Out of the path of Vega and her love!  
Why lurkest thou on Love's uplifting path?  
Orion, raise thy many-jewelled sword  
And smite the menace, or let Hercules  
Venture against the peril Vega knows.

What is that star in Coma, glorious  
And beautiful? is it a comet lost  
Forever on the fields of night? a world



Out of its orbit or a soul between  
The knees of judgment, face to face with Thoth?  
It dims the other stars! Antares pales,  
And Sirius becomes a smoking torch  
Held downward in the token of one's death;  
Perseus fades like a beacon into mist,  
What time a vapour comes upon the sea  
And ships toss, waiting for its welcome light;  
Andromeda dissolves, as in a dream  
The phantoms of dead women leave the arms  
Of weeping lovers wakened by the day;  
There is no gleam from Algol; no red glare  
Burns in Aldebaran: brighter still it grows!

Again some god is on his way to earth!  
A master is about to enter flesh  
And tabernacle for a while with men!  
Dim, vast, long-dead, forgotten Ages rise  
Out of their sepulchres, and with them come  
Old heroes who have lived and died for truth!  
There is a sudden noise of falling crowns  
Cast by great kings in honour of this child!  
The whispering of waves on moonlit shores  
Dies down to silence, and the harmonies  
Of spheres that turn to music also fail;  
There is a pause within the universe;  
God's breath is held; the pulse of things  
Stops, and all colours blend into a tone  
Which is the minor key of that great chord  
We call the rainbow—!

Only one bright star  
Beacons from heaven—only a little voice  
Sounds through the world—a cry—a baby-cry—  
A baby weeping—

## **PILATE'S WIFE**

## PILATE'S WIFE

PALE Fear, the joy of Psyche, in the stone  
Against the glimmer of an early morn—  
Light growing out of gloom! Haggard and worn,  
A woman's face with eyes of terror known  
Within a dream fulfilled! A little moan,  
A word breathed brokenly: *He stands forlorn,*  
*Crowned with the crimsoned mockery of thorn,*  
*The babe I bore to Pilate on his throne!*

Down the wide arches of the pillared years  
Sounds that faint cry where women wail,  
Their beauty misted over with the tears  
That fall forever; high above the spears,  
The glittering of helmets and the mail,  
One on His cross cries: *Peace! love will prevail.*

## PILATE'S WIFE

Was it a dream that held me shuddering  
A moment past?—O good and golden dawn!  
Now is the face of Fear no longer turned  
Over a bare white shoulder, with the glaze  
Of horror in her eyes; methinks she smiles  
To hear the flutter of the temple-doves,  
Rising to flight beyond the sound of horns  
Blown by the Levites to announce the day.

Was it a dream! Have I not seen His face  
Among the gathered men from Galilee,  
Come up with garlands on their heads to keep  
Passover? Yesterday I leaned and looked  
From the great tower that overtops the wall  
Guarding the Gentile's Court—what made me stand  
Breathless and clutching at my throat?—  
He was so tall and—oh, the hair of Him!  
Confusion overturned the tables, drove  
The money-changers from a voice that cried:  
*My Father's house is called the house of prayer,  
But ye have made it like a den of thieves!*

Was it a dream! Lo, as I slept, He came,  
Woke me from slumber with a little touch  
Soft as a leaf that flutters from the bough.  
First it was dark, save for a silver star  
Glancing between the curtains: *'Tis the hand  
Of my lost babe whom pale Persephone  
Leads out of Hades, knowing that I weep!*

Forthwith I was aware of violets,  
And—oh, I saw again the dreamy eyes  
Of that wee one I held upon my breast,  
Ere all the world went cold with death of him!  
After the violets, I heard a voice  
That softly said: *Woman, why weepest thou?*  
I looked, and lo! it was the face of Him  
Who walked within the temple-court and drove  
The money-changers in confusion out.  
I knew the wine-red glory of His hair,  
Knelt and then whispered: *Lord Adonis, hail!*

Within my room was silver radiance  
That touched the marbled Fear, and made her brow  
Gleam like the gladness yonder Psyche shows;  
The star that twinkled through the curtain-fold,  
Trembled above His turban—white as snow:  
Then it was given me to greet the Child  
Celestial, born of spirit—not of flesh;  
Child of the virgin-love; Child of the dream  
Dared through the ages, since the primal form  
Leaped from the dust!

*Thou art my little babe?*  
*The little one I lost?* and lo! He said:  
*I am thy babe-to-be, who shall be born*  
*Of every woman when the sword of pain*  
*Hath pierced and made her wise to mother me!*

The vision faded. Night returned the star  
Between the curtains, and with shadow clothed



My marbled Fear, lifting the violets  
Out of the room; trembling, I lay upon  
The black panther that Pilate slew for me  
And brought in triumph from the chase—its head  
My pillow—then I slept and once more dreamed:  
Again the violets! the Face! the Child!  
Lo! they were scourging Him, where Pilate sat  
With eyes averted—silent on his throne.  
*Pilate! Pilate! thou must not do this thing!*  
*The violets are fading from His eyes,*  
*Beneath the passion of a crown of thorns!*  
*Pilate! thou wouldst not crucify the babe*  
*I bore to thee—!*

Oh, with what joy I wake  
To find it was a dream, and that the dawn  
Shames Fear to laughter! I will rise and go  
Forth to the morning and with Daphne take  
The road that leads unto the Mount of Olives;  
Find where the little trellised arbours are,  
Wet with the dew and glad because of blossoms  
Now on the vine or creeping through the grass;  
Sing to the twitter of the speckled bird  
That feeds her young, so jealous of her joy  
And wistful for my baby who is dead!

What is that noise like thunder in the street?  
*Let Him be crucified!*



**THOMAS DIDYMUS**

## THOMAS DIDYMUS

HE found his way to truth by paths of pain,  
Proving his faith beneath the circling thorns  
That pierce the brow of thought; like one who mourns  
A comrade dead, he called and sought in vain  
Mid shadows for the light. He too had lain  
Among the pots empty of oil. The horns  
Of Sabbath sounded: *Rise! for day adorns  
Earth with its splendour, and the shadows wane.*

Palely he answered: *Mock me not with breath—  
Thy phantom fashioned of the wistful tears—  
He whom I love is dead!* Forthwith there came  
Out of the mist a face with eyes of flame,  
And then a voice: *Thomas, what foolish fears  
Made thee forgetful? lo, there is no death!*

## THOMAS DIDYMUS

I tell thee, Peter, thou hast dreamed this thing—  
Sorrow hath made thee mad! Still dost persist?  
O foolish man! did I not see Him dead?  
There is no doubt that He is dead and shut  
Within the tomb of Joseph—man, I helped  
To roll the stone against the door of it—  
Behold the purple bruise on this right hand—  
It is a testament that He is dead!

We will not laugh again, Peter! Work? Aye,  
There's work enough to do: Yon boat of thine  
Upon the pebbled beach; the drying net  
Frosted with scales from yester-even's catch;  
Tiberias itself, an amethyst  
That waits a keel to carve a cryptic word  
Of sorrow on its face; these answer: *Work!*

*Fishers of men?* faugh! here's a better thing  
For thee and me—*Men?* better far the brute!

Come with me, Peter, to the ancient task—  
Concern about the boat and fishing gear  
Will make thee quite forget the grief that mars  
Thy solid mind: did He not call thee *Rock?*  
Come, friend, and put thy shoulder to the prow  
Of that old craft of thine, sliding the keel  
Along the sand until it finds the wave—  
There's joy upon the wave, man, joy! joy! joy!

There's healing for the heart within the wind,  
Lifting the spell that made Tiberias  
A purple stone set in a ring of gold.  
He loved Tiberias; the curving shore;  
The hills above it, and the white walled towns—  
Capernaum and Magdala. Recall  
How oft He sat among the high beached boats,  
Talking to children! How He laughed with them,  
And told what happens underneath the lake,  
Or in the sky, or through the vines and trees,  
Or on the mountains! While we mended nets,  
Lest one dear word of Him be missed.  
There was a crippled Ethiopian lad—  
Not more than five hands high from head to heel—  
With eyes like onyx stones, lips coral red,  
Limbs polished ebony—a sackcloth rag  
Girding his loins—sat always at His feet,  
And fingered the fine tallith Mary made—  
Spoke not but harkened; still I see His hand  
Touch tenderly the crisp curls, pause and smooth  
The velvet blackness of that little face!  
Strange how the lonely loved Him and the sad  
Crept to His side; how every outcast knew  
His coming! Once when there were wind and rain,  
And thou wast out alone upon the deep—  
O brave above thy brethren! He came through  
The thunder to the shore and watched for thee.  
*Simon!* He called. Thy name upon His mouth  
Was like the dove of Noah in the dark—  
Winged whiteness through the storm—and lo! a shaft



Of lightning clove the murk, discovered thee  
Undaunted, beating home; I saw Him smile  
With joy of thy strong manhood; heard Him say:  
*Simon, thou art a rock!* He loved thy strength,  
Thy hardness, man; therefore thou must be strong  
Against this madness that doth quite consume  
The sons of Zebedee and all the rest.  
The dead are dead! they can not rise! The flesh  
That knows corruption will not clothe the bones—  
Ashes to ashes, Peter, dust to dust!

O voice of Jesu! miracle of sound;  
Of eyes of Christ! ineffable and blue.

Come! come! to work, I say; for memory  
Is madness, Peter: we must both forget—  
Death lies for us in this remembering—  
The shore is haunted by His joyous feet—  
His footprints sing within the golden sand—  
There is a whisper on the wave of Him!  
The lilies of the field make me recall  
Something He said about King Solomon;  
The wayside grass is like the lengthened roll  
On which the Psalms are written, and they tell  
Of quiet walks with Him at eventide  
Among the corn; but yester-noon I saw  
A sparrow fly before a screaming hawk,  
And I remembered what He said about  
His Father's care!

Yea, I will go with thee—  
Thy house was ever His. Perchance thy wife  
And little child may drive the spell from thee.

Farewell, thou shore, ye idle fishing boats!  
Farewell, dear lake of dream, thy days are past;  
Thou wilt not any more hear Peter laugh  
Or Andrew sing: we will come back to toil  
But there will be no laughter, neither song  
Nor prayer; our Master whom we loved is dead!

Peter, this path is worn by many feet;  
How often from our boyhood have we walked  
Hither with John out of Capernaum!  
Thou wast the strong one; he the lad of dreams;  
I ever curious, and questioning  
What ye together held, who lived each day  
Within a world of mountains, fields and sky;  
Of green and scarlet boats and their brown sails;  
Of sandy shores and bearded fishermen.  
My world was one of unreality,  
Whose trees were ghosts from graves of men who died  
Before the flood; and such my world is now.

This did the Master: made me love the world;  
Took me, a prisoner of thought, gave eyes  
That I might see the miracle of life;  
Gave feet that I might go upon all roads,  
Undaunted by the fears of crippled men  
Who falter where the strong are striding by;

Gave tongue to taste a cup of friendly wine  
With yellow dates and figs, white wheaten bread,  
The hot flesh of a kid baked on the coals.  
Through Him I learned to see the stars and know  
The names of flowers and the kinds of birds.  
One day He led me to a linnet's nest  
All warm and downy from her mother wings,  
And there were fledglings: *These*, the Master said,  
*Are miracles!* He made me like a child,  
Taught me their games, until sad Didymus  
Played with them on the shore. From Him I learned  
A song with bells of camels in refrain  
And singing of the sands beneath the wind.  
*Thomas*, He often said to me, *if thou*  
*Wouldst give a gospel to the world, then know*  
*All things are good; if thou wouldst save a soul,*  
*Thine own must be a candle in the dark—*  
*Shining that men may see and follow it.*  
*Miss nothing—all thou seest is of God!*  
*The Pharisees make much of fast and tears;*  
*Taste thou and feel the preciousness of life:*  
*For when the world is not aware of joy,*  
*God is denied.*

Now since I helped to roll  
The stone against the tomb, I am returned  
To my old world of shadow—Love is dead!  
I can believe no more. The eyes of heaven  
Are closed in sleep. The angels fold their wings  
And hide their heads, indifferent to harps.

There is no music in the sky—a cross  
Hath silenced everything. The world is cold.

Well, here's the house at last—how I have talked!  
I have forgotten thee in my own grief—  
The grief that will make me as mad as thou  
And all the rest.—Ah, no! the dead rise not.  
What sayest thou?—Man, I should want to place  
This hand upon the wounds, ere I believed  
The word of Mary!

I will not go in—  
Let me rest here beside the open door.  
Thy wife is waiting, Peter, and the child;  
The evening meal is on the table—spread  
As when He supped with us in yonder room—  
Go thou within—

The stranger! who is he?  
Peter, who is the stranger in thy house?  
The child is on His knee!—Peter, a scar  
Is on the hand that plays among the curls,  
And little marks of pain are on His brow!  
Peter! He looks at me—

My Lord and God!

MARY

## MARY

FAIREST of women must have been that maid  
To whom the great archangel Gabriel  
Announced Messiah. Were there asphodel,  
Rue, violet and rose within the glade  
Of Mary's vision? *Do not be afraid,*  
The Presence whispered, *King Emmanuel*  
*Cometh to earth!* His voice was like a bell  
Softened by distance, ere its clangour fade.

Tender is Gabriel—the lord of birth;  
He comes to mothers with white folded wings,  
And eyes like pansies misted by the dew:  
The little cradle-song a woman sings,  
Crooning above her babe, that angel knew  
When all the morning stars hosannaed earth!

## MARY

Sometimes I wonder if I mothered Him—  
The past is clouded by the many years,  
And I am very old. Was it a dream—  
Those angel-faces bending from the blue,  
With far hosannas flung upon the night?

Bend close to me, my John, for death is near,  
And I would tell thee what is in my heart—  
A tale of earth and star and seraphim.

The roar of Ephesus is like the wind  
Among the olive-groves of Nazareth!  
I like not Ephesus. I faint to see  
The little white-walled town where Jesu played!  
I like not Ephesus; Diana's face  
Haunts me!

Throw wide the lattice; let the air  
Breathe on my face; how peaceful is the sky!  
I am not lonely when I see the stars.  
On such a night we fled from Herod, crossed  
The Jordan; when the great round moon peeped out  
Between the cedars, I heard Jesu laugh  
And call to it.

Beloved! I grow weak—  
Breathing is pain—enfold me with thine arms  
And lift me up—I want to keep the stars



From dancing down the pavement of the night!  
Now while I live a little longer, take  
My tender, broken memories of Him:  
He was like other children; wee white hands  
Would close and open on my mother-breasts  
In joy of life, and there were baby-words  
Which only women know who bring to birth.  
He was a child of laughter, loved the light,  
Would crawl to clutch a sunbeam on the floor.  
Once when a bird lit on the window-ledge,  
And He sat gazing with wide-open eyes,  
A smile upon His lips, He made the noise  
A fledgling makes—forthwith, the feathered one  
Flew down to Him and perched on His right hand!  
When He first walked and found the garden-path  
To Joseph's shop, there was a sound of laughter—  
Deep laughter of a man blent with the sound  
Sweeter than reedy pipes, the way He laughed!  
His arms grew strong from labouring to shape  
Plough handles and the heavy oxen yoke;  
His breast broadened; for mighty were the blows  
Of His axe on the timber. He liked food;  
Slept well; rose early, singing as He dressed,  
Stole out to meet the dawn with water-jars  
And filled them for His mother at the well.  
The children used to laugh and clap their hands  
When He went by them coming home from school.  
Old men and women loved to touch His hair  
And whisper blessing on His sun-gold head.  
His eyes were like two pansies in the wheat;

His mouth was music and His hands were love!  
But there were those strange moments when His face  
Shone like the star that rose above His birth;  
Then He would go from me and stay apart.  
The hill beyond the town had charms for Him;  
This He would climb and dream a morning through,  
Or stay until the vesper-planet came.  
Once I did chide Him, and I said: *O Son!*  
*Thy father had to work alone this day;*  
*Thy mother brought the water from the well;*  
*Thy playmates waited for thee in the field;*  
*It is not good to stray so far alone!*  
And He made answer: *O my mother dear,*  
*God called me from the hill and I obeyed!*  
Lo! there was that upon His face I saw  
When I rebuked Him in the temple-court;  
When I spoke to Him of the wedding wine;  
When I sought after Him with my son James;  
When He fell fainting underneath His cross!

This is the agony all mothers know,  
When God begins to claim what they have borne;  
When life calls and the strong man rises up  
To leave his mother weeping at the door;  
Yea, ever since Eve bare to Adam Cain,  
This pain hath pierced all women like a sword—  
Will pierce till every woman's work is done—  
Hath pierced through my soul, as the angel said!  
Therefore doth Mary with her dying breath  
Plead in the name of Jesu for all mothers:

*O sanctify the fountains and build walls  
To guard from taint those everlasting springs!*  
'Tis woman's secret—mothering of babes—  
Pain is her sceptre, love her robe and crown;  
She is the warder of the waiting stars—  
Those winged sons of the morning—those great lords  
Who sang across the chaos and the void  
When the foundations of the earth were laid—  
Those incarnating Christs who seek through her  
Their Bethlehems and wind-swept Calvaries!

Teach every woman how Maid Mary's Son  
Is God's oath that no mother bears in vain;  
That every pang of child-birth is the price  
Paid for the coming of a starry Christ;  
That all the angels fold their wings and kneel  
When God is born again! There is no joy,  
There are no cadences of smitten harps,  
Kept back from any little babe at birth:  
The planets on their golden axles turn;  
The suns vibrate their glory through the night;  
The constellations call across their courts,  
Flinging from all the high eternal towers—  
*Glory to God! Peace and good will to men!*  
For God is in the things which He hath made.  
The clustered gourds that grow along the wall;  
The dew upon the damson and the fig;  
The brown of lengthened furrows lately ploughed;  
Stir of the sap, unfolding of green leaves,  
Upthrust of grass and corn, return of birds—

Nest-building underneath protecting boughs  
With little songs of mating and of love;  
Teach: every mother is a miracle!

What was He, ere His body grew in me?  
What is He, now that He is gone from me?  
*The Master!* Aye, John, thou hast found the word—  
He proved that on the cross of Golgotha!  
And of all mothers Mary is most blessed,  
Who held Him first and suffered ere He found  
Gethsemane! I knew the nail and thorn  
Before they fastened Him upon a tree—  
*His eloi lama sabbacthani*  
Fell from my lips in birth-pangs of His life!

John! it grows dark—a chill is on my face!  
See! there—a little baby on the floor:  
His hair is like the tassels of the corn;  
His eyes are pansies growing in the wheat!  
Nay, not a baby now: my starry boy,  
Broad-breasted, like a lion in His strength!  
Nay, not a boy: Christ of Capernaum,  
The friend of sinners, healer of all hurts—  
White is the turban that adorns His brow!  
Now it is Christ of Golgotha, blood-stained  
And crowned with thorns on His uplifted cross!  
He is among the golden candlesticks;  
His eyes are brighter than the noon-day sun;  
His voice is like the waves upon the shore;

His feet are like two tongues of cloven fire  
Mirrored forever in a sea of glass,  
And there are multitudes of lifted hands  
Holding white flowers to adore His name—  
*Jesu—!*

**PAUL TO TIMOTHY**

## PAUL TO TIMOTHY

WITHIN the tower of eternal Time  
Great names are hung, and each is like a bell  
Heard through the distant harmonies that swell  
To clear, melodious intervals of chime:  
Immortal names of those who stood sublime  
Where others faltered, turned aside, or fell;  
Who took no pledges from the hand of Hell,  
Brave on the path which only heroes climb.

And of these tones that from Time's tower fall,  
Pealing the ages by, one through the chord  
Carries the music of a great refrain—  
Hark! how its melody on earth is poured  
In silver tumult, as of summer rain—  
O dominant, persistent name of Paul!



## PAUL TO TIMOTHY

The long day ends at last, O Timothy,  
And I, Paul, prisoner of Jesus Christ,  
Wait for the dark. Upon my window-ledge  
A sparrow twitters, pecks at the iron bars  
As though to set me free this night of Rome.  
A lad is singing somewhere in the street;  
His voice, careless and free, recalls Cilicia—  
Tarsus, my city, where the Cydnus flows—  
Recalls those first, far days when in my heart  
No pain had found a place, and I was Saul  
The Benjamite, named for the son of Kish.

How swiftly Age turns back the gate of Time,  
And with what eager pace pursues the path  
Trod by the feet of Childhood! I can see  
The scarlet-prowed Phenician ships, triremes  
Down from the Tiber, and Egyptian barges;  
Abundant fruitage of the date and palm,  
Tall, Bacchic amphora, the perfumed bales  
Of Tyrian purple, piled along the quay:  
Again I hear the sailors and their songs,  
The strange, brown mariners of many seas,  
With arms like anchor-cables in their strength.  
Oh, then was I a wanderer of earth,  
And dreamed of brave adventure in far lands!

They say the Hebrew burning in my blood  
Closed all life's doors, save one, upon the world;

That I, the Pharisee of Pharisees,  
Contemned the beauty and the song of Greece!  
How little do they know, my Timothy  
My dear disciple and my bosom friend—  
Heart, soul, feet, hands, eyes, ears and lips of Paul—  
How little do they know!

To-morrow morn,  
Without the city wall, I shall kneel down  
Before the Roman sword and die!—O Death,  
Where is thy sting? O Grave . . .

The lad still sings—  
Would thou couldst hear his song! Anacreon?  
Nay—Sappho! He? Athenian, I think.  
’Tis such a voice as that Eunice heard,  
Son of the Faith once and for all delivered,  
Telling of Timothy returning home,  
Or ever thou didst follow Christ and Paul.  
Why doth he sing and hale me back to life—  
Who on the morn must die? And Sappho’s song!  
Flee from this world ordained to death!  
The wrath of God is kindled in the sky,  
And Babylon shall be consumed in smoke!

How all the gold is gone from out the west—  
’Tis crimson now, and on the Forum falls  
A menace as of blood!—O Babylon!  
The cup of thine iniquity is full,  
And runneth over even to the ground.  
Still doth he sing; and always Sappho’s song!

O Greece! the tongue of Homer and of Paul  
Is in that song; behold, the sound thereof  
Goes forth unto the ends of all the world!

How little do they know, son Timothy,  
Of Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ!  
A Pharisee? yea, straitest of that sect;  
Learned in the Law? aye, from Gamaliel;  
A persecutor of the Church of God?  
Saul who consented unto Stephen's death—  
Ah, woe is me! Yet little do they know,  
Who know not this: The law of sin and death  
Is done away in Christ by whom all things  
Are sanctified; and neither Jew nor Greek,  
And neither bond nor free, exist in Him  
Who is the first begotten Son of God,  
The keystone of life's slow ascending arch,  
And who completeth all things in Himself.  
Nathless, I found this truth not easily:  
In those far boyhood days beside the Cydnus,  
Watching the sailors and the ships, I felt  
Shame of my passion for the many tones  
And tinctures of the coloured sails and prows;  
Shame at the tumult in my heart at songs  
Sung by the boatmen; for the Law is hard,  
And presseth with a heavy hand upon  
Youth and the innocent delights of youth.

Young Rabbi Saul the Thunderer, and Saul  
Consenting unto Stephen's death, are dead—

Slain by the piercing of the cross of Christ;  
Christ of the lilies—He who loved the fields,  
And heard the children in the market place  
Complaining at the unresponsive feet,  
And ears deaf to their piping and their song.  
Doth He know my lad singing in the street?  
My young Athenian, whose voice for Paul  
Cries *Ave atque Vale* on the world!

Christ is not quickly learned, and gradual  
Is the progression of a soul to Him.  
Hard strove I through the barriers of thought,  
And one by one dissolved the old ideas  
That misted over mountains of desire;  
Before I found that all things beautiful,  
Like lilies of the open field, are spread  
Beneath the benediction of His love.

Write this again: *There is no bond nor free!*  
This is the Faith; and this is Jesus Christ,  
The Saviour of the world! Think what it means,  
O Timothy—this Faith thou hast received  
To give and guard at Ephesus. Let fall  
Distinctions from henceforth, and keep in one  
The diverse aspirations of mankind.  
Thou wilt remember what I lately wrote—  
The feet of him who bears that letter speed,  
As sped Pheidippides: *All utterance*  
*That is inspired comes only out of God;*  
For nothing that is beautiful and true

Lives but by breathing of the Holy Ghost!  
And they, who like this foredoomed Babylon  
Build citadels cemented by men's blood,  
Are numbered with the damned! Do I not know?  
Am I not Paul, the prisoner of Christ?  
Creators of sweet sound and lovely form  
Care not for Babylon: they seek the hills,  
And find God in the thunder of the sea;  
They know Him where the cedar and the pine  
Are vocal with the passion of all souls  
That are with dross of earth unsatisfied;  
This have I learned from the Athenian  
Who sings the joy of Sappho unto Paul.

Gone are the gold and scarlet from the west;  
Night falls, and Rome is like the Galaxy—  
Indefinite with stars! A myriad  
Of tiny flames are flaring on the hills,  
And in those evening fires the souls of men  
Are manifested—souls that upward burn  
In emulation of the beautiful;  
For the invisible, pure things of Him,  
From the creation of the world, are seen  
And understood by what is made. One God,  
One Law, one Hope, one Faith and one desire,  
Are in the impulse of creative hands,  
And on the lips that sing—as sings the lad  
To Paul the prisoner, great Sappho's song!



**PORPHYRY TO MARCELLA**



## PORPHYRY TO MARCELLA

SHOULD we not render tribute to the kings  
Who doffed their diadems to one of thorns?  
Forgetful of the murk of those dull morns,  
Men miss the whiteness of triumphant wings;  
The song that fell from brave prophetic strings  
Of lifted harps; announcement of the horns  
Blown by glad heralds: yea, Tradition scorns  
Those minstrels, cries: *Their deeds were evil things!*

O unclaimed brethren of our risen Lord!  
We call you saints among the holiest  
Who unto death, eternal Christ confest;  
Because your praise was also to Him poured,  
His be your guerdon and your great reward:  
*These are among my brightest and my best!*

## PORPHYRY TO MARCELLA

I lay at Lilybæum almost dead,  
When my dear master, Plotinus, found me;  
Hunger and tears had well nigh set the soul  
Free from the flesh that keeps it prisoner.  
Longinus was the first to show the way—  
Malchus, my name, he changed to Porphyry,  
Because I wore the purple robe of Tyre,  
The city of my birth—he had no one  
More hungry for his measured words than I;  
He was so learned that all the books of Greece  
And Alexandria were in his mind!  
At length I came to Rome, a youth of thirty.  
Uplifted in my pride, I sought to prove  
Amelius and his great master wrong;  
Failed in my argument; found that defeat  
Was triumph, for it led to Plotinus!  
Six years I studied, then in wild despair  
Fled unto Lilybæum—fled in tears,  
Crying: *Soul, thou art fettered by the flesh:*  
*Come, Death, and set me free to find the light!*  
For days I did not know the taste of food;  
Thin as a palimpsest, my body grew  
Diaphanous—the older word revealed  
Under the recent scripture of new birth;  
I hated life, and lay me down to die!  
There was no pleasure in the cleansing bath  
That makes the body almost worth its soul.  
I turned from music that can pierce the flesh,

And touch the soul; avoided every face,  
Vowing no friend should tempt me back to life.  
Then came the Master with the spoken word  
That only the Initiate may hear,  
And called me back to life and its strait path  
All souls must tread up far ascending planes  
Of matter till the mystic moment comes.

Marcella, ere I close these written words  
Meant for thy consolation and thy peace,  
A something further I would add—a thought  
Fashioned through contact with the creed of Christ,  
Which Origen taught me at Cæsarea:  
Philosophy is threatened by the Christ;  
Our days are torn by this tremendous strife  
'Twixt past and present, and all ancient thought  
Is strangled by the pressure of His word,  
Who gives a life that may be seen of men—  
Handled and understood. Philosophy  
Is not a thing for hardened hands to grasp,  
Nor for dim, labour-wearied eyes to see.  
The slave who bends above the heavy oar,  
Grotesque and like a demon in the dark  
Of his foul galley-prison, can not see  
The sunlight on the wave, the distant shore  
With palms like palaces beneath the blue;  
He can not feel the freshness of the wind  
Blowing the breath of vineyards from the hills:  
A sip of water from the broken gourd—  
Guarded from yonder thirsty Nubian—

A moment's hasty munching of dried dates;  
A little sigh for freedom he has lost,  
And, later, sleep upon the plunging deck;  
These are the measure of his dreary life.  
He has no leisure for the figured stars,  
No time to ponder on the Pleiades,  
Or mark the distance of Alcyone;  
There is no wonder anywhere for him,  
No joy in crocuses and asphodels,  
No madness in the music of the rain,  
No fine, sweet aspiration bred of nights  
Under the opal crescent of the moon:  
Wouldst thou gain from him lasting gratitude,  
Then talk not thou to him of *eidola*,  
But give him food and rest, and promise him  
The liberty and love that he has lost!  
So I have named and crowned Christ conqueror,  
Who is the king of slaves and all who bow  
Beneath some yoke! He gives to fettered life  
What thoughtful Plato can not hope to give:  
A sip of water with a leaf of dates;  
A little balm for limbs bruised by the chain;  
A dream of final freedom from the oar.

Yet there is much that I would criticise—  
Not Christ, but those who name Him through the world!  
I know the writings well, have studied them  
At Cæsarea under Origen—  
The greatest teacher of the Nazarene—  
Find Christianity is not the Christ.

As Plato's thought was clouded by the words  
Of those who claimed to be interpreters,  
So Christ is hindered by the jealousies,  
Factions and sects that wrangle in His name.  
I am not hostile to the Carpenter,  
Who is a marble pillar on the sands  
All desolate and bare save of its beauty!  
No written word can ever tell of Him,  
Yea, though a god came down from heaven to earth,  
And wrote it in a book of beaten gold,  
Graving each letter with a fiery star—  
The mystic and forbidden hieroglyph  
That opens to the Adept all the doors  
Of Wisdom; it would fail to figure Him!  
No eye of earth could gaze upon His face,  
For when He passed this way Christ wore a veil;  
He suffered men to touch a seamless robe,  
Or rattle dice for it beneath the cross,  
Forgetful of the god above the crowd!

Philosophy is not a truth for slaves;  
It is for growing gods like Plotinus.  
These teachers of the Christ would prostitute  
Philosophy to that ignoble bed  
Where Superstition dreams, and from this fate  
Must I set Wisdom free; else from the sin  
A child be born to wet the world with blood,  
And blurr the page of history with tears!

Came He too soon, Marcella? was Christ cursed,  
Like His own fig-tree, putting forth His leaves  
Before their season? would a later age  
Have understood Him better? So it was,  
And shall be: One who thinks among the stars,  
While others grope for pebbles at His feet!





**DANTE**

## DANTE

*Behold the man who hath been down in hell!*  
Ravenna whispered when Dante walked by.  
In hell? yea, for his great soul dared to try  
All paths of that adventure which befell  
Him on the way to heaven. No one can tell  
What God doth with a prophet ere his cry  
Waken a world from sleep with words that fly,  
Like arrows, swift and irresistible.

Out of the depths of dim Gethsemanes,  
After the dregs of Grief's most bitter cup;  
Spent with the passion of a bloody sweat;  
How earth's immortal, mighty minstrels seize  
Their harps celestial, and with song play up  
The host from Golgotha to Olivet!

## DANTE

Guido, I have held the torch of truth  
To this bewildered age of many lies;  
And ere Ravenna take my weary bones,  
Dante hath somewhat for thy patient ear.  
The books are in thy hands; do thou with them  
As it seems best to thee: men will not know  
The secret doctrine till the world hath won  
The bliss of Beatrice; found the morn  
Above the misted peaks of Purgatory;  
Left Hell behind and its tormenting hate!  
Thou wilt not see that day; the world will cry  
Through centuries for Dante's hidden word.

What is my meaning? this: Each soul must go  
Down every gulf of Hell, until it find  
That frozen centre in the love of self;  
For Purgatory's bleak ascent begins  
Only when each wan pilgrim finds how cold  
Is love self-centred, seeking for its own.  
The ancient strife of Ghibelline and Guelf  
That rends the states asunder, pouring blood  
On Italy, as though the grapes that grew  
From Arno and the Tiber to the Po  
Were crushed and emptied in a flood of wine,  
Is proof of what I say: Men will not hear  
The word of Dante, they must wait until  
The King of Love is placed on Peter's throne,  
And Florence, Rome and Rimmini are one!

The books thou hast are but a parable,  
An image of Æonian Romance;  
The tale of every man is written there:  
Lose not thyself in symbols; lift thy thought  
Up to the height of spirit; strive to win  
The vision that no earthly eye hath seen.  
The pilgrim journeying upon life's way,  
And finding torment, is the human soul—  
I figure him as Dante in the books;  
Virgil is Mind, and Beatrice Christ.  
Think on the soul, divine its mystery:  
By Christ all things are made; He is the urge  
Of matter, is the principle that seeks  
Ascent through atoms till it find the star!  
The soul is Christ; the blossom from the vine;  
A sword within the sheath; a diamond  
Set in a ring; wine in a stoppered jar.

Truth must be hidden in old metaphors,  
Lest watchful Mother Church smell heresy,  
And interdict my books! Strange how the priest  
Fails as a prophet; is grown blind to stars  
That beacon wise men, while the written word  
Blurs from the droppings of his altar lights!  
This talk now of a local hell and heaven;  
The cleansing pains of penance and the like;  
The praying of a soul out of one place  
Into another—but there! the walls have ears,  
And sometimes whispered words may carry far—  
I think, Guido, thou dost understand—

Let us return: Hell is the way of Christ,  
The school wherein each soul must learn to read  
The alphabet of which Christ also saith:  
*I am the first and the last!* a stage of growth;  
A mile upon the march among the stars!  
Thou art a cunning player on the lute,  
Hast sung my Terza Rima to the strings,  
While all Ravenna listened; dost thou tune  
An instrument according to the tone?  
And if, because of tension and of strain,  
The strings snap, dost thou lay the lute aside?  
Not so, my friend; for there are other strings  
To make the triple melodies again.  
The soul is an immortal instrument  
Played by the Master—Christ on many chords;  
He strings it with the functions of the flesh,  
And keys them up according to His will,  
Making the perfect harmonies through pain!  
What if the body fail and discord come?  
Well, there are other bodies for the soul  
Which must endure the trial, till the notes  
Are equal and the Player satisfied.  
Yea, every human soul hath its own Christ—  
The Beatrice of celestial dream.  
The Christ of Jesu proved His instrument,  
Whose cross is pledge that every cross doth rise  
For each soul's triumph, till eternal song  
Blend with the music of the Morning Stars.

Take now my figure of the Mantuan—  
Virgil who guides the pilgrim on his way:  
Reason is that persistence of the soul,  
Which leads it down the awful zones of fear,  
Proving all things. The soul is born of Christ,  
But Reason leads that Child forth on the Path  
Till he return instructed. Note the place  
Of Purgatory—opposite to Hell;  
Its seven rings are cycles of re-birth  
Through which the soul ascends to Paradise.  
Each fall must have a corresponding rise;  
We must go up through that which was descent,  
Must win to victory where we have failed.

Thou wilt remember all the pits of Hell;  
The fearful sweep down deeper gulfs of pain;  
The trees that bled; the hate that gnawed the skull  
Of its old enemy; the gates of Dis:  
These are but pageantries of thine own soul,  
The downward progress of thyself past sin!  
The sin thou hatest, thou hast somewhere sinned;  
Somewhere of old thou didst pass through that sphere,  
And learned its terror: thou hast gained one step  
Up the ascent that ends with Beatrice!

Now as each soul draws nigh its waiting Christ,  
It takes on character of that same Lord,  
And reaches down another soul to save;  
This taught the Master: *When thou hast been changed,  
Make strong thy brother!* Lift the feeble hands;



Bind up the wounds; sing to the desolate;  
Go forth and cry aloud in all the streets:  
*Come, for the feast is ready—ye are called!*  
Summon the poor, the halt, the dumb, the blind,  
Begging along the highway of the world;  
Speak to the painted harlot and the thief:  
*Put on your wedding garment—Christ is come!*  
Rebuke the trumpets and the drums of strife,  
Cry to the captains and the lords of war:  
*Know ye the marriage of the Lamb is nigh,*  
*And ye are called unto the wedding-feast?*  
Say to the Pope enthroned on Peter's chair:  
*Descend and walk beneath thy cross through Rome,*  
*And on the Hill of Love be crucified!*

Mix me a cup of water and of wine—  
I grow too weak to talk. . . . There! let me sleep—  
I may dream of the lovely towered town  
That will not give me place to rest my head.  
I ache for Florence and her terraced hills;  
The gleam of Arno underneath the bridge;  
The song of troubadours at carnival;  
The pavements and the pillars and the domes!  
Snuff out the candle. Friend of mine, good night!





# JOAN OF ARC

## JOAN OF ARC

DREAMS of Domremy: There's a little hill  
Of apricots and grape-vines, looking down  
Upon the towers of an ancient town,  
Red roofs, gardens and cobbled streets, where still  
Maid Joan communes with Michael; 'tis her will  
France shall be free: kissed by the sun, her brown,  
Bare arms are lifted to a lily-crown  
From which wild odours of the blossoms spill.

Hark! from the distance throated thunders roll;  
The sky is shaken by a bursting shell;  
Pillars of smoke, like hostile giants, stand  
Over the meadows of that sunny land:  
*Back from my people! O ye hounds of hell—  
Strike for thy freedom, France, and for thy soul!*

## JOAN OF ARC

The wind of dear Domremy kissed my face;  
Immortal gladness grew within the wood;  
Wonder went with me down amid the corn,  
Beneath the far infinitude of sky!  
Now when the good God saw I loved His world,  
He was so pleased He called one of the saints  
And said to him: *Dost thou behold yon maid  
Kneeling before my flowers? since she cares  
For these my little ones, I give to her  
The saving of fair France! Go unto Joan;  
Be voices, sudden visions, frequent gleams  
Of glory slanting through the swaying trees;  
Hurt her with beauty, vex her soul with joy  
Of finding what the waters say at night,  
When all the stars go wading in the brook,  
Swim with the lilies on the dappled pool  
Or sail the moonlit margin of the sea!*

First I was made aware of one new note  
Thrilling the rapture of the nightingale,  
A tone within the colour of all buds  
Bursting to May, an under-harmony  
Sung by the wind among the apple-trees;  
Then there was nearness of the leaning clouds,  
As though the sky had opened like a field  
Of sheep that claimed me for the shepherding;  
Last came the voices and great Michael's face—  
I may not speak of Michael!

Now that the shame is lifted from the land,  
And down in old Domremy mothers sing  
While children dance about the magic tree,  
Death does not seem unfriendly. There's a place  
Within the wood, smooth and all green with grass;  
Thither we used to go at Holy Day,  
And on a mossy stump our Pierre would sit  
Piping for us a joyous little tune,  
While we together wove a moment's dream  
Of laughter with our bodies—keeping time  
Upon the grassy floor with what he played.  
Ah, Pierre! the angels took you long ago,  
And often through the voices I have heard  
A faint sound as of piping! There's a hill  
Of apricots and vines that called me first,  
When I was but a little, dreaming child;  
Here Michael met me in a burst of light  
That smote the vale with splendour like a sword:  
There was no voice then, only sudden light—  
A light that dimmed the noon-day sun and turned  
The blue sky pallid.—Light! thou gavest Joan  
A wisdom greater than the lore of priests;  
Then was my spirit quickened, and I knew  
All mysteries of life: I whom a book  
Baffled, read what was written on the grass;  
Listened to life, and caught the whispered words  
Shaken from rain-drops by the laughing leaves;  
Ran down the hollow of the hills and heard  
Voices beneath the clover, under stones,

And saw a multitude of spirit-hands  
That beckoned from the branches of the trees.

How they who sought to prove me one bewitched,  
Have pondered: *Whence hath this poor peasant maid  
Such wisdom!*—God of Michael from the mist;  
God of my angel with the ready sword  
Swift from its scabbard, an uplifted flame  
Against oppression; by the mouths of babes  
And sucklings Thou hast ever ordained strength!  
Upon the prayers of mothers and of maids,  
The War Lords of the world shall not prevail;  
For God is with the gentle things of earth,  
With those who wear the armour of His love,  
And gird their loins for service in His name!

Whence came the voices? Friend, do you not know  
That earth is but a vestibule of veils  
Before the House not made with human hands!  
About us there are spirit-presences  
Who know that we have need; they reach to us  
With longing, but the veils prevent their touch;  
They call to us, and we go wondering:  
*Whence came my sudden joy that conquers grief?*  
O sleepy sense of touch that can not feel!  
O mortal deafness that will never hear!  
O eyes of earth that, seeing, do not see!  
God gave us flowers and the patient trees;  
Mirrored the moon against a crystal sky;  
Fashioned the stars from sun-gold in the west,

Hung them beneath the roof of all the world,  
Till morning melts them back again to mist:  
God gave us these, and with them children's eyes,  
And ears, and hearts, that we might wake to touch,  
Sight, sound of angels! Foolish mitred men,  
What do ye, with your learning, understand?  
I have talked with the angels, and I know!

Now that fair France lifts up her liliated head  
To greet Time with her laughter, and unveils  
To kiss the mouth of Fortune, Death will come  
Softly at day-break, calling unto Joan.  
I shall not fear the faggots and the stake;  
The folded arms upon the breast, the stare  
Of eyes that lust to look at innocence  
Robed with red draperies of clinging flame;  
For Michael will be waiting for my soul!  
Together we shall dare the paths of space;  
Find Pierre piping on his appointed star  
Among the flowers that he loved so well,  
Glad of my coming, swift to sing me home:  
And from the music that we make on high,  
There shall be in the heart of France—a song!



**GIORDANO BRUNO**

## GIORDANO BRUNO

THE Monk of Nola is indeed no more;  
His cell is empty, and the threefold cord  
Hangs with its cowl beside Saint Peter's sword!  
Vainly the Vatican leans on the lore  
Of Councils; what was everywhere of yore  
Held by the faithful, and with one accord,  
Yields to the moment of his mighty word,  
Who looked not always after but before.

Rise from your ashes where yon statue stands  
In Campo di fiora! Bruno, speak  
That word of thunder to the world abroad:  
*Man is the Sacrament made by Christ's hands;*  
*He is, of life's ascending slope, the peak—*  
*The crown—the consummation of his God!*

## GIORDANO BRUNO

Even thou, Giovanni, my familiar friend  
In whom I trusted? What! thou art afraid  
To look at me? Do Bruno's eyes hurt thee?  
Nay, do not hide behind the chasubles  
Of Holy Inquisition; speak thy mind,  
And tell the Fathers that which they would know:  
How certain books I wrote traduce the creeds  
Of Mother Church!

What pleasant nights we spent  
Within thy palace; what discourse we had  
While others slept, and I led thee beyond  
The crystal spheres of old to boundless space!  
What moved thee, O Venetian, to betray  
Thy friend? . . . Nay, mutter not, nor cross thyself!  
Giordano hath not made a covenant  
With devils! . . . Yea, my Father, read the charge.

So that is what my accusation saith?  
The Monk of Nola is indeed no more!  
He was a curious boy who loved to look,  
Without distraction of crude, painted things  
Hung on the wall, tarnished by candle-smoke,  
Out of the window where he knelt to pray;  
For he had learned that God is not confined  
In paint and mortar, that He is revealed,  
As the Apostle saith, through what He made.  
He found no virtue in a Saint's thighbone;

No miracle in the Madonna's face  
Above her altar, when the sanctus bell  
Rings and a wafer is become the Christ!  
Yea, rather was he caught within the loops  
Of light thrown by the stars among the vines,  
Or fastened by the many-coloured cords  
Of sunrise. Noonday magic on the grapes;  
The crickets chirping where the wheat is ripe;  
The call of birds; the river's ancient song;  
Trees and the carnival of summer-flowers;  
Claimed Bruno when he tried to be a monk.

Then came Copernicus! At first I laughed,  
Railing with many words: *What! Earth so fixed—  
The central point of heaven, round which the sun  
Wheels and stars turn—a floating sphere in space?*  
Then reason woke within me and I found  
Copernicus was right, and went one step  
Past my new master—taught that nothing bounds  
The universe but law.

Nature is one.

One purpose weaves the web within the warp  
Of matter, though the stuff be molten suns,  
Or atoms in the amethyst that gleams  
Upon the finger of His Grace—my judge!

When I was but a boy at Nola, fond  
Of roving, on a summer day I climbed

The hill Cicada; from its height I saw  
Vesuvius was like a cone of grey,  
In contrast with the vineyards at my feet:  
Later I stood above Pompeii, found  
My hill was changed to barren, rocky slopes;  
Round me were many blossoms and the vines!  
I learned by this illusion of the eyes,  
To challenge sense with reason—prove no fact  
By feeling—Fathers, is that heresy?  
He is an infidel who dares to bound  
God's might! Take now a creed of Mother Church—  
The Mother whom I love—hold ye one thought  
That cramps Creation and Omnipotence?  
Then ye are heretic. Find God in Nature,  
As ye discover artists by their work.

*Ponder the lilies of the field*, said Christ.  
O Priests of Venice! ye who try me here  
Against my death at Rome for heresy,  
What do ye know of lilies? can ye tell  
The monk of Nola how the lilies grow?  
I knew them ere I learned to sing High Mass,  
Or hear confession and expound the Book!  
If only ye seek God beyond the stars,  
How can ye hope to find Him Who is near?  
If ye disdain the portico of heaven,  
How can ye love the House not made with hands,  
Eternal in the heavens? Oh, how ye rob  
Life of its joy! How narrow is the world  
Wherein ye move! Your sky is but a dome

Of hammered brass alight with holy wicks  
Placed in the great concave; your moon a lamp  
Borne in procession round the altar—earth!  
God's truth! ye think as though the universe  
Were Peter's Church at Rome, and all the flowers  
Are waxen—though the world is white with bloom!  
I break the dome, and exorcise the fear  
That haunts the faith of men; I say to them:  
*God stands closer to us than we to self.*  
*He is the Soul of our soul, He unites*  
*All Nature. Grain of incense, drop of oil,*  
*Hath Him as much as any Holy Mass!*  
*Lift up a broken oleander stalk,*  
*A wheaten straw, a pebble round and smooth*  
*And ye have lifted high the very Host!*  
*Man is the Mass; therein God's love transforms*  
*The elements—making of them His flesh!*  
*God is existence; everything is God.*  
*Pain, suffering, and sin—aye, death itself—*  
*Are shadows creeping down Vesuvius,*  
*When the sun rises; shadows disappear*  
*At noontide glory, life is at the morn;*  
*Therefore these glooms against the mounting sun*  
*Fade fast, as men are more aware of God:*  
*When life has reached its zenith, there will be*  
*No shadow anywhere of pain and sin,*  
*For all will share its glad meridian!*

Now, Fathers, will ye send me bound to Rome—  
A prisoner, like Paul, of Jesus Christ,



And doomed to die for witness of my word?  
Wherein is Bruno heretic? What truth  
Have ye which I hold not, and even more?  
Yea, all that is contained within the Creeds  
And Councils of the Holy Catholic Church,  
Giordano holds. But faith transcends both creed  
And council, is the evidence of things  
Not seen. Is faith the journey or the road?  
Faith is the pilgrim with a scrip and staff,  
Taking all roads at pleasure. Is the Church  
Weak as to fabric, that the stake must stand  
Forever as the symbol of her strength?  
Dogma that must be buttressed by the ban  
Of excommunication is not truth!  
Who hates in the defence of what he holds,  
Or drops one bitter word against the name  
Of his antagonist can not be true:  
The calm of Christ before Caiaphas;  
Paul's manner with the Areopagus;  
All martyred love: bear witness to my word.

And so ye have condemned me! Venice gives  
My body unto Rome—this night, perchance,  
Or on the morrow, I must take the road  
Of martyrdom to Rome—how many more  
Must travel that same road, because their faith  
Is overmuch! But old skins ever fail  
New wine, and from the Branch—Copernicus—  
Thought-clusters hang, which from the press of  
Time



Will pour fermenting liquor to destroy  
Your moulded bottles. Bind me to the stake;  
Scatter my ashes on the Tiber's tide;  
The world will kneel in tears for what ye did!

**DARWIN**

## DARWIN

ETERNAL night and solitude of space;  
Breath as of vapour crimsoning to flame;  
Far constellations moving in the same  
Invariable order and the pace  
That times the sun, or earth's elliptic race  
Among the planets: Life—dumb, blind and lame—  
Creeping from form to form, until her shame  
Blends with the beauty of a human face!

Death can not claim what Life so hardly won  
Out of her ancient warfare with the Void—  
O Man! whose day is only now begun,  
Go forth with her and do what she hath done;  
Till thy last enemy—Death—be destroyed,  
And earth outshine the splendour of the sun.

## DARWIN

Alfred, I am a withered leaf—a twig  
Dry of the sap; yet how I love the picture!  
Is heaven less blue because the stellar dust  
Veils night eternal from all human eyes?  
Life is, though forms pass: well, I will regard  
One moment filled with wonder of the world,  
Forever worth the passing, when this jar  
Crumbles! . . . Why do you nod in protest, friend?  
I am serene and patient, grateful, glad—  
Asking no more of life than what it gives:  
Eyes quick to see the march out of the mist,  
And into mist once more; ears that are tuned  
To music of the many strings of joy  
And sorrow; tongue so wistful of the word  
Telling the truth; obedient hands and feet;  
And over all, the mind with wings that soar!  
I trust, ask nothing, watch meanwhile, and wait;  
Whatever is for me to win, no one  
Can take: if there be not some afterword,  
Some music and a flower from the feast,  
A going up the hall with Him, my Host,  
In conversation as of comrades—well,  
Enough that I was called to sup with Him,  
Drank from His cup and pledged the world with wine!

My fundamentals are misunderstood—  
Is the fault mine? 'Tis not a ready pen  
That wrote *The Origin*. The many reeds

Of melody were never mine; I saw  
More than I had the skill to tell, confused  
The music. This my meaning: Chaos bears  
To that eternal Energy called God,  
A child whose name is Form, swaddled with clouds,  
“And with no language but a cry!”—the noise  
Of thunder, telling of vast, molten seas  
Which clamour, till the child becomes a star—  
This planet—swinging through the zodiac  
Among his brethren who come, crying: *Hail,*  
*Child of our mother Chaos!* From the sea  
Huge shapes appear, plunging to rocky shores  
Forbidding them the land, till tail and fin  
By aspiration change to foot and wing.  
Hoarse trumpetings of anger or of pain;  
Red ooze of blood on bracken; now tell the tale:  
Struggle of Form with Form—experiment  
Of Nature working blindly but in faith  
To one end: *Mind!* Love dominates the chords;  
There is a song upon the star-lit hills:  
GLORY TO GOD! ON EARTH, PEACE AND GOOD  
WILL!

Brave are your words of war; and yet I think  
Survival of the worst, not best, is in  
Those passionate hymns of praise: war's work was done,  
Through struggle of the fittest brute, when Form  
Was found for Mind. You say that always war  
Genders the noblest? calls a god from clay?  
That work was done before the glacial glare

Rivalled the redness of yon setting sun!  
You are at odds with Nature, who destroy  
Man's body. Is there not some higher test  
Of greatness in the patience of that faith  
Which dares adventure on forgotten roads,  
Or hidden trails unfound by human feet,  
To find God cradled where the cattle are?  
Must we who sought and found, go lonely back  
Without Love's offering of gold and myrrh—  
Back to the place we knew before the star  
Came softly from the silences of night?  
How worth the painful journeying, to cry:  
*I have seen God upon His mother's breast!*

Never have I been atheist—the fool  
*Hath said within his heart, there is no God!*  
God may hide in the mass; may look on life  
Through eyes that slowly opened, until man  
Gazed in the artist and the seer, and said:  
*How beautiful! how good!* but I hold not  
With those who cry: *Behold God in the Book!*  
If there be God, He must be always One;  
Must not be hid by this, revealed in that;  
Must be unchanging, like unchanging law  
Which keeps the constellations in their place,  
Holds atom unto atom. Bud and blade,  
Fronde, leaf and petal are obedient  
Each to its character; and, like the suns,  
Depart not from the course, by law ordained,  
Up the ascent of life. God is in Nature—

There only may we find Him. Did she fail  
To make Him known to man, then would man be  
Apart from her and alien to the earth.  
God has not ceased to walk down garden paths.  
He has not grown a-weary of the rose.  
He is not deaf to lifted song of leaves,  
What time the artist comes for tinting them  
Out of his ample shards of autumn-tones.  
God is the lover of all open wings,  
Of all who glorify the world with song.  
There are no moments of the infinite;  
All things come to their growth by Nature's law—  
A star, a planet, species or the soul;  
Therefore, I wait, make no assertions, stand  
Humble before the mystery of life and death—  
The pillars of that portico whose doors  
Are shut; though from the steps I may look down  
To trace the winding path up which I toiled,  
And view my halting places: There I slept,  
Dreaming a while; there I rose with a laugh,  
Made strong by what I dreamed, and took the road.  
How many mile-stones we have passed, my friend,  
In our long journey to the double-door!  
Will that door open, Alfred? shall we see,  
One day, the Good Host standing in the hall  
With waiting hands and lips of love that smile?



**VOICE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

## VOICE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

VOICE of our Century, whose heart is broken,  
Weeping for those who will not come again—  
Lord Christ! hast thou been crucified in vain?—  
Challenge the right of every Tyrant's token:  
The fist of mail; the sceptre; ancient, oaken  
Coffers of gold for which thy sons are slain;  
The pride of place, which from the days of Cain  
Hath for the empty right of Power spoken!

Be like a trumpet blown from clouds of doom  
Against whatever seeks to bind on earth;  
Bring from the blood of battle, from the womb  
Of women weeping for their dead, the birth  
Of better days with banishment of wrong,  
Love in all hearts, on every lip—a song.

## VOICE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In much I am Agnostic, hold against  
Fine definitions of the ancient creeds,  
Keep back from dogma and forego the Church;  
But this I have through many searchings found:  
A Will at work on Man's deep truest self—  
A Power that is not Nature's central Flame,  
Yet works with it. This Will is in the Law  
Called Evolution, and this Will is God!  
It hides in Matter—is the Principle  
That leads the atom out of the electron  
Up through amœba till it ends in Man.  
Man is a mile-stone on the slow ascent  
Whose summits are encompassed by a mist.  
We may look back a little down the path  
By which we came, and we may look ahead  
Dimly to guess what stations lie beyond;  
But we must not be certain, for we walk  
By Faith and not by Sight.

I plead emancipation from the Church,  
The tyranny of Priests who blind the eyes  
Of Wisdom, threat and ban all those who seek  
Truth in the moment—not in yesterdays.  
I plead deliverance from Diplomats  
And lying Warders of the State, who draw  
Nations to battle for the gold that buys  
Grafter and Sycophant. I plead the right  
Of Workmen to the wage commensurate

With the expense of living; plead the right  
Of women to a place with men in all  
That touches life, of children to good food,  
Pure air, laughter and play; I plead the right  
To think and give expression to my thought.

Man's night is now behind him and the day  
Leaps up in glory burgeoning the hills.  
What lies behind us is the nursery  
With babies' baubles scattered on the floor—  
Toy soldiers, arks and pictured fairy books—  
The Man smiles kindly at them as he goes  
Forth to his labour! There is much to do:  
The winding trails of ancient Ignorance  
Must be made straight—a highway for the King;  
The hills that threatened us must be brought low;  
For there are songs of gladness in the wind,  
There is a chord of music from the trees—  
A noise of distant thunder that proclaims  
The coming of the God whose name is Man!









